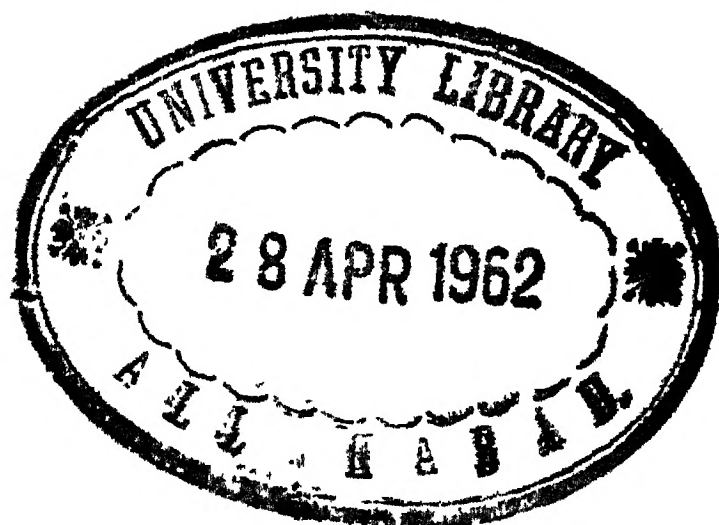


# IQBAL

## His Art and Thought

SYED ABDUL VAHID



JOHN MURRAY

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Tribute to Iqbal by Bahar  
the great Persian poet

قرن حاضر خاصه اقبال گشت  
واحدے کر صد ہزاران برگزشت  
شاعران گشتند جیشی تار و مار  
وین مبارز کرد کار صد سوار  
مسکے گشت از سخن گوی بیار  
گفت کل الصيد فی جوف الفرا

مَلِكُ الشَّجَرِ أَبِیْ خِرَاسَانِی

Iqbal has made this century his own:  
A hundred thousand he surpassed, alone,  
This champion with a hundred horsemen's might  
An army of brave poets put to flight,  
And, equal to the challenge and the call,  
Having great talents, he excelled in all.

(Translated by Professor A. J. Arberry)





To  
MY BROTHER  
MOULVI SYED ABDUL WAHEED, M.A.  
OF MAYO COLLEGE, AJMER, INDIA  
With Love and Gratitude

تو خورشیدی و من سیارہ تو  
سرا پا نورم از نظارہ تو

You are the Sun and I am your planet;  
I become luminous by gazing at you.



## *Preface*

THIS BOOK was first printed in Hyderabad-Deccan in 1944 and was distributed privately. Owing to demand it was twice reprinted. In the light of the many suggestions I have received from those who read it in its original form, the text has now been extensively revised for this first English edition and two new chapters have been added. It is hoped that these alterations may make it both more interesting to students of Iqbal and also clearer in some points of interpretation. For valuable criticism and suggestions I have to thank numerous friends, especially Mr E. M. Forster, Mr Abdul Wahab Azzam, at one time Egyptian Ambassador in Pakistan, Professor P. E. Kahle of Bonn University, Professor A. Bausani of Rome University, and Professor A. Schimmel of Ankara University. For the unfailing courtesy with which they have responded to all calls upon their time and scholarship I have also to thank my friends Professor A. Arberry of Cambridge, Mr C. V. Merrett of Walsall Grammar School, and Dr Waheed Mirza of Lucknow University.

I must record my gratitude for the help and encouragement that I received in my studies of Iqbal from my late wife; but for her help it would not have been possible for me to pursue these studies amidst the distractions of a busy and exacting official life.

S. A. VAHID

*Karachi, 1958*



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## *Introduction*

I HAVE been studying Iqbal's poetry and philosophy for the last thirty years. During the course of this study I encountered numerous difficulties which I tried to solve in my own way. So far as I can judge, my efforts were attended with considerable success; and the result of these efforts is now elaborated into this book, which is published in the hope that it may help others in understanding Iqbal. It is not in any way an exhaustive study. That would require a range of knowledge and compass of intellect which I do not possess. All that can be claimed for the book is that it represents a critical and objective study of some aspects of Iqbal. While I have described briefly the main contributions he has made in the realms of thought and literature, no attempt has been made to judge the relative importance of these contributions. But I think enough has been said to indicate that his contributions in both these spheres rank with those of the greatest in the world. Amīr Shakaib Arselān considered Iqbal to be the greatest thinker produced by the Muslim world during the last thousand years. Hence no apology is needed for giving so much space to his philosophy. But it must be made clear that Iqbal was concerned mainly with the empirical value of ideas and had no use for mere speculation. In fact he always derided a philosophy whose main concern was futile abstractions and endless speculations in no way concerned with man's life or his personality.

Besides helping others to understand Iqbal, there is another object in publishing this book. The original sources of information are fast disappearing. His numerous friends are leaving us one by one. It is becoming more and more difficult to lay hands on his numerous articles, speeches and letters. Students of Iqbal must explore, exploit, and, where still possible, preserve the information which can be collected from these sources before it is too late. Thus while its main object is to further understanding of Iqbal, this book also indicates the lines along which students must start work while we still possess the necessary material.



Some chapters will be found to be sketchy. This was unavoidable owing to considerations of space. If they serve to stimulate other workers to expand the themes touched therein, my object in writing them will be served.

One word about the translation of Iqbal's verses. It is impossible to preserve in any translation their haunting beauty and charm, but for the benefit of those who are not acquainted with Urdu or Persian it was considered essential that a translation should be given. So an attempt has been made to give the sense at least. It is possible that even here I have failed in several cases.

To me the study of Iqbal has been a source of great strength and happiness. In him I have always found that which confers healing and refreshment alike upon mind and spirit. I can only hope that this book will enable many others to derive the same benefits.

ہیچ اکسیر بہ تاثیر محبت نرسد  
کفر آوردم و در عشق تو ایمان کردم

Love is more potent than any elixir;  
My unbelief your Love turned to belief.

S. A. VAHID

*Hyderabad-Deccan*  
*1st July 1944*

# I

## *Mainly Biographical*

نعرہ زد عشق کہ خونین جگرے پیدا شد  
حسن لرزید کہ صاحب نظرے پیدا شد  
فطرت آشفیت کہ از خاک جہان مجبور  
خود گرے، خود شکستے، خود نگرے پیدا شد

Love exclaimed that one with a bruised heart was born!  
Beauty shivered that one with vision came into existence!  
Nature stirred because from the clay of a predetermined world  
A self-maker, a self-breaker and a self-preserver came into being!

WHAT ROLE should an artist play in the struggle of mankind? What is his right place in a world torn and afflicted? This question has occurred to many artists and is, in fact, asked and answered in Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*. To Mathis Grunewald working peacefully with the Archbishop of Mainz comes the thought that art is vanity, an escape from duty. So leaving his work, renouncing love and patronage, Mathis joins the peasants in their insurrection. But here also there is no satisfaction for him; in fact only a sense of waste and perplexity. At last in a vision he sees himself as St Anthony and the Archbishop in the likeness of St Paul. St Paul brings him comfort and an answer to his perplexity. 'Artists are not as other men, their special mission is divine, so return,' says St Paul, 'return and paint.' Iqbal was at the threshold of his career faced with a similar dilemma, expressed in the following lines written during his stay in England:

مدیر محزن سے کوئی اقبال جا کے میرا پیغام کہدے

جو کام کچھ کر رہی ہیں تو میں، انہیں مذاقِ سخن نہیں ہے

Iqbal, I would like someone to convey my message to  
the Editor of the *Makhsan*—  
Nations strong in action set no value on mere poesy!

It is impossible to express in words the gratitude that humanity owes to Sir Abdul Qādir and Sir Thomas Arnold for having persuaded Iqbal not to give up poetry. Mathis' conflict was linked with the fate of Ursula, his renounced love, and Albrecht, his rejected patron, but Iqbal's conflict concerned his numerous admirers. Imagine the loss the world of literature would have sustained if Iqbal had given up writing poetry. What strikes us most is that this great poet could have considered taking up other fields of activity at all. When we begin to scan his career, the prodigious versatility of the man staggers our imagination! Here is a poet and a philosopher who is also a fine prose-writer, a great linguist, a remarkable jurist, a well-known lawyer, a leading politician, a front-rank statesman, an esteemed educationist, a respected teacher and a great art critic. Morley says, 'Versatility is not a universal gift among the able men of the world; not many of them have so many gifts of the spirit as to be free to choose by what pass they will climb the steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar.' But Iqbal was evidently free to make his choice. And he has bewildered men by his brilliance. It is not often that one comes across such a versatile, prolific and gifted genius; and for similar examples of omnicompetence, one has to turn to Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Alberti.

Iqbal has left us poetry in two languages, Urdu and Persian, and was actually planning to write *The Book of a Forgotten Prophet* in English when death snatched him away. In prose he wrote in two languages, English and Urdu, on such diverse subjects as Philosophy, Economics, Politics and Literature. As a teacher he taught Philosophy and English literature in Pakistan and Arabic literature in England. While Goethe failed as a lawyer and had to give up the profession, Iqbal practised law all his life, and whatever detractors may say, he earned his living from the profession. Nature does not produce such versatile men frequently and, as somebody has remarked, it may be a thousand years before

another Iqbal is born. Humanity delights in the exploits of great men, as they show to what heights man can rise, and Iqbal's life provides a noble and inspiring example of the heights to which the human intellect can soar in spheres so widely apart. But to give the life-history of such a great genius in a brief sketch is like attempting to paint a landscape on a postage stamp. His towering personality had so many attractive facets, each superb in itself, that if we paused to glance at each our impressions would need volumes. Hence we can do no more than barely mention a few of the more outstanding ones. But it must be remembered that in addition to all that is recorded, much more remains unrecorded. ✓ Iqbal was born at Sialkot in the Punjab on 22 February 1873. His ancestors, who were Kashmiri Brahmins, had accepted Islam about three hundred years before. Iqbal refers to his Brahmin extraction repeatedly in his verses:

مرا بنگر کہ در ہندوستان دیگر نمی بینی  
برہمن زادہ رمز آشناے روم و تبریز است

Look at me, for in Hind thou wilt not see again,  
A man of Brahmin extraction versed in the mystic knowledge  
of Rūm and Tabrīz.

He finished his early education in Sialkot and migrated to Lahore in 1895 for higher studies. In Sialkot he was lucky to have as his teacher Shamsul-'Ulema Mīr Ḥasan, a great Oriental scholar. This great man did not take long to recognise the perspicacity of his young pupil's intellect, and encouraged him in every possible way. In later years Iqbal recognised the debt he owed to the Shamsul-'Ulema in his poems.

Iqbal started writing verses while still a student at Sialkot. About this time Dāgh was recognised as one of the greatest masters of Urdu poetry, and Iqbal started sending verses to him for correction. Dāgh read some poems, and then wrote back to Iqbal that his poems needed no revision.

It may be mentioned that Dāgh lived long enough to see young Iqbal acquire countrywide popularity, and he often used to refer with pride to the fact that at one time he had corrected Iqbal's poems.

Although at the time of leaving Sialkot, Iqbal had only passed his first University examination, he had received a solid grounding in Oriental lore, and was composing verses, which, though they lacked the breadth and maturity of later work, already marked him out as a poet of no mean order. About this time Lahore was fast developing into a great intellectual centre. Urdu was replacing Persian throughout Hindustan; and to encourage the development of Urdu, several societies were sponsored and were doing great work in Lahore. Some of those societies occasionally organised poetical symposiums. A very popular symposium was the one held in Bāzār-i-Hakīmān, inside Bhatī Gate at the House of Hakīm Amīnūd-Dīn. At one of these symposiums Iqbal recited his well-known poem containing the following lines:

موتی سمجھ کے شان کر ہی نے جن لئے  
 قطرے جو تھے مرے عرق انفعال کے

Divine grace picked up, regarding them as pearls,  
 What were drops from my tears of repentance!

Arshad, one of the acknowledged masters of Urdu poetry, was present; much impressed by these lines, he foretold a great future for the young poet.

Just opposite the house in which symposiums were held lived Hakīm Shahbāzud-Dīn, a man with a lovable and charming personality, whose house provided the meeting-place for a band of young enthusiasts interested in literary matters. Iqbal also joined this circle.

Iqbal began attending poetical symposiums frequently and often recited poems there. But still his popularity was confined to the world of undergraduates and those connected with the educational department. About this time a literary society was formed in Lahore whose membership included some well-known literary figures of the time. At one of the meetings of this society Iqbal recited his well-known poem on the Himalayas and it was very much appreciated by all. It contained modern ideas draped in old Persian phrases and was full of patriotic sentiments. Many requests for its publication were received, but Iqbal refused them all. In the end he allowed it to be published in the April 1901 issue of

the *Makḥzan*, a newly started Urdu journal. This introduced Iqbal to a wide readership all over the country. In the beginning publication of his poems was confined to *Makḥzan*, but as his popularity and fame spread, other papers and journals also approached him for permission to publish them, and very often succeeded in obtaining it.

The first important poem he read in a large gathering was at the annual meeting of the Anjuman Ḥimāyat-i-Islam of Lahore in 1899. The poem was *Nāla-i-Yatīm*. Next year he read *An Orphan's Address to the 'Id Crescent* at the same meeting. Neither of these poems, nor another, *Abr-i-Guḥarbār*, composed about this time, are included in Iqbal's published works. All these poems are important, and are helpful for studying the development of his poetical genius.

While writing great original poems, Iqbal could still find time to translate English poems like *The Spider and the Web* and *The Mountain and the Squirrel*. In *The Bird's Complaint*, really meant for children, he touches politics too, and about this time he wrote several short poems which contained references to politics. The most important poem of this type was *Ṣadā-i-Dard*:

جہنم رہا ہوں کل نہیں پر تکی کسی پہلو مجھے  
ہاں ڈبو دے اے محیط آب گنگا تو مجھے

I am burning and I find no rest on any side,  
O waters of the Ganges, drown me!

In March 1904, he wrote *Taṣwīr-i-Dard*:

وطن کی فکر کرنا دان مصیبت آنے والی ہے  
تری بربادیوں کے مشورے ہیں آسمانوں میں  
ذرا دیکھ اس کو جو کچھ ہو رہا ہے، ہونے والا ہے  
دھرا کیا ہے بھلا عہد کسن کی داستانوں میں

نہ سمجھو گے تو مٹ جاؤ گے اے ہندوستان والو  
تمہاری داستان تک بھی نہ ہوگی داستانوں میں

Think of thy country, O thoughtless! trouble is brewing;  
In heaven there are designs for thy ruin.  
See that which is happening and that which is to happen!  
What is there in the stories of olden times?  
If you fail to understand this, you will be exterminated, O people  
of Hindustan!  
Even your story will not be preserved in the annals of the world!

He further says:

بنائیں کیا سمجھ کر شاخ گل پر آئیاں اپنا  
چمن میں آہ کیا رہنا جو ہو بے آبرو رہنا  
جو سمجھے تو تو آزادی ہے پوشیدہ محبت میں  
غلامی ہے اسیر امتیاز ما و تو رہنا

How to make up one's mind to build a nest on the rose-bearing bough?  
What is the good of living in the garden if it is a life of disgrace?  
If you realise it, the secret of freedom lies in love,  
And slavery is the result of discriminating between people.

Then came *Nayā Shawālā*:

کچھ فکر پھوٹ کی کر مالی ہے تو چمن کا  
بوٹوں کو پھونک ڈالا اس بس بھری ہوائے

Thou art looking after this garden, so find a remedy for disunity,  
This pestilential air has ruined all the shrubbery.

Towards the middle of the last century, modern Urdu poetry was passing through the throes of birth, and those were naturally accompanied by severe pangs in the shape of mutual recriminations and adverse criticism of every innovation. New subjects made the adoption of new words and expressions necessary, and this caused a flutter in the dovecots of conservatives who opposed all innovations. Unable to question the undoubted melody



of Iqbal's beautiful verses, they began criticising his language. They charged him with introducing Punjabi expressions into Urdu. Iqbal took part in these controversies, and his replies to these critics were always convincing and impressive. The controversies remind one of Tennyson's *Literary Squabbles*. In due course all criticism melted into admiration, and the voice of detractors, though never completely suppressed, sank to a low murmur.

At Lahore Iqbal came under the influence of Sir Thomas Arnold, an influence which in its potency can be well compared with that of Maulvī Mīr Hasan at Sialkot. It did not take Sir Thomas Arnold long to discern Iqbal's gifts of heart and intellect, and with his sympathetic insight he soon succeeded in piercing the shell that obscured a most beautiful individuality. While Maulvī Mīr Hasan's influence and guidance had given Iqbal a deep insight into the humanistic foundations of Muslim culture, Sir Thomas Arnold's company introduced him to all that is best and noblest in Western thought, and at the same time initiated him into modern methods of criticism.

Iqbal wrote some great poems during this period and published his first book, which was incidentally the first book on Economics in the Urdu language, but he had still no clear vision of his great mission. The poems written about this time, although perfect from the artistic point of view and good enough to earn for him an important place in the temple of immortals, lacked the breadth of vision and maturity of thought which characterised his subsequent compositions. About this time he thought of writing an epic poem on the model of a master like Milton. In 1903 he wrote to a friend:

For a long time I have been yearning to write in the manner of Milton (*Paradise Lost*, etc.) and the time for that seems to be fast approaching, because in these days there is hardly a moment when I am not thinking seriously of this. I have been nurturing this wish for the past five or six years, but the creative pangs have never been so acute as now.

This letter reminds one of Milton's letter to Diodati: 'But you ask what I am thinking of? Let me boast in your private ear. Of immortality, God help me! I am growing my wings and preparing for flight; but as yet my Pegasus only rises on very frail



wings; let me be humbly wise.' Both Milton and Iqbal lived to write great and sublime poetry.

As advised by Sir Thomas Arnold, Iqbal went to Europe for higher studies in 1905. On his way to Bombay, he visited the Dargāh of Khawāja Nizāmud-Dīn in Delhi and paid his homage to the two great poets that are buried there—Amīr Khusrau and Ghālīb. When a singer recited one of Ghālīb's poems in front of the great poet's tomb, Iqbal was very much affected.

In Europe Iqbal began to see the larger horizon of things and to move in spacious realms. He stayed there for three years, and these years played a great part in the development of his thought. It was not a period of deeds but one of preparation. The libraries of Cambridge, London and Berlin were easily accessible; and Iqbal read voraciously and discussed matters with European savants and scholars. His outlook on life underwent two important changes about this time: he conceived an utter dislike for the narrow and selfish nationalism which was the root-cause of most political troubles in Europe, and his admiration for a life of action and struggle became more pronounced.

جنبش سے ہے زندگی جہاں کی یہ رسم قدیم ہے یہاں کی

The life of this world consists in movement,  
This is the established law of the world.

Whereas previously:

زندگانی جس کو کہتے ہیں فراموشی ہے یہ  
خواب ہے، غفلت ہے، سرمستی ہے، بیدوشی ہے یہ

That which is called life is naught but forgetfulness.  
It is slumber, indifference, intoxication and unconsciousness.

Now:

راز حیات پوچھ لے خضرِ نجستہ کام سے  
زندہ ہر ایک چیز ہے کوششِ ناتمام سے

For the secret of life ask the inspired Khidr:  
'Every object must ceaselessly strive to live.'

While there was still conflict, it was showing signs of becoming resolved as the urge for creating new values and aims began to find expression.

Another important change connected with his stay in Europe occurred in his medium of expression. He started writing verses in Persian. This was a period of intensive preparation. He took his degree at Cambridge, obtained a doctorate at Munich, and qualified as a barrister. He taught Arabic for six months at London University, and delivered a series of lectures in London, the first of which was held at Caxton Hall and was reprinted in all the leading papers.

Before his return to India he warned Europe in lines of rare prophetic vision of the abyss towards which her materialism was leading her:

دیار مغرب کے رہنرو! نو خدا کی بستی دو کان نہیں ہے  
کھرا جسے تم سمجھ رہے ہو وہ اب زر کم عیار ہو گا  
تمہاری تہذیب اپنے خنجر سے آپ ہی خود کشی کریگی  
جوشاخ نازک پہ آشیانہ بنے گا ناپائیدار ہو گا

O residents of the West, God's earth is not a shop,  
The gold you think to be genuine will now prove to be of low value.  
Your civilisation is going to commit suicide with her own dagger,  
The nest which is made on a frail bough cannot but be insecure.

During his stay in England, and soon after his return to India, Iqbal was wondering whether he should adopt a life of action or reflection. To attain perfect balance between the two was well-nigh impossible. And as he made progress in the reflective sphere he decided to forgo prizes that were within his reach as a man of action. It was better so for the world.

Iqbal returned to Lahore in August 1908, and joined the Government College, Lahore, as a part-time Professor of Philosophy and English literature. He was allowed to practise law. But after some time he resigned the professorship and concentrated on law. His reactions to nationalism and pride of race and colour

became very pronounced at this stage; these were beautifully summed up in the following lines of *Khidr-i-Rāb*.

جو کرے گاتیا ز رنگ و خون مٹ جائے گا  
ترک فر گا ہی ہو یا اعرابی والا گھر

He who will make distinction of colour and blood will perish,  
He may be nomadic Turk or a pedigreed Arab.

But the great event was the publication of his poem, *Āsrār-i-Khūdī*, in 1915. This book created a storm amongst the pseudo-mystics. His attack on Hāfiz, as a representative of those who preached ascetic inaction, was strongly resented, and several replies in prose and verse were published. But these effusions of pseudo-artists and pseudo-mystics passed in due course into oblivion, and Iqbal lived to see the great popularity achieved all over the world by his great poem. Nothing is so sacred as a rut and no one is more annoying than the person who jolts us out of it. This happened in Iqbal's case too, but his fame grew in spite of the detractors. So far as Iqbal himself was concerned, from now onwards there was complete accord in his thought, the goal was clear and the future lines for his work were well-defined. The task that Iqbal had set himself was gigantic and lesser people would have quailed at the immensity of a mission which involved shaking millions of people out of the moral inertia that had been paralysing their spirits for centuries. But a prophet and a seer, such as Iqbal, was not to be dismayed by these considerations. He flung a challenge to the forces of reaction, inertia and stupor in unmistakable terms and never faltered in the performance of his mission. At times he realised the loneliness of his position and prayed for a sympathetic companion in these words:

دل بدوش و دیدہ بر فردا ستم در میان انجمن تنہا ستم  
شمع را تنہا پیدن سہل نیست آہ یک پروانہ من اہل نیست  
من مثال لالہ صحرایم در میان محفلے تنہا ستم  
خواہم از لطف تو یارے ہمدے از رموز قدرت من محرے

My heart is with yestereve, my eye is on to-morrow:  
 Amidst the company I am alone.  
 It is not easy for the candle to throb alone:  
 Ah, is there no moth worthy of me?  
 I am as the tulip of the field;  
 In the midst of a company I am alone.  
 I beg of Thy grace a sympathising friend,  
 An adept in the mysteries of my nature.

His letter to Hāfiz Aslam Jairāpūrī gives one an indication of the mental anguish which he suffered at this stage from the unkind criticism of those groping in darkness and ignorance. The following extract from this letter will be found interesting: 'I am very grateful to you for your review on *Asrār-i-Khūdī* which I saw in the *Alnāẓir*. "I saw in thee a man in these days when men are so rare!" The verses that I had written on Hāfiz were really meant to illustrate and criticise a literary principle. They had nothing to do either with Khwāja's personal views or beliefs, but the general public could not appreciate this fine distinction and the result was a long controversy. If we accept the principle that beauty is beauty whether its consequences are good or harmful, then Khwāja is one of the best poets of the world. Anyway I have dropped those lines and in their place I have substituted lines which illustrate the literary principles which I still consider healthy.' <sup>1</sup> But nothing was going to keep Iqbal back from preaching his gospel.

This is not the place to deal with the growth of Iqbal's poetical genius, but no biographical sketch of Iqbal can afford to ignore his poetry, for if it can be said of any poet that his life and poetry were one, that poet is Iqbal. *Asrār-i-Khūdī* was followed by *Rumūẓ-i-Bekhūdī*, which was completed in 1917, but was not published till the following year. It was about this time that Iqbal was seriously thinking of narrating the story of the *Rāmāyana* in Urdu verse. But the idea never materialised.

For purposes of study Iqbal's poetry can be divided into two parts:

- (i) That written up to and including *Rumūẓ-i-Bekhūdī*.
- (ii) Everything written after this.

<sup>1</sup> This letter is published in the Iqbal number of *Jauher*, Delhi.

Before going to England, Iqbal had written some beautiful poetry in Urdu, but it can be said of this poetry that Iqbal sang because, like a linnet, he had to. All this poetry shows the perplexity of the restless genius. Stay in the West brought about a complete change of Iqbal's views, and the change was naturally reflected in his poetry. On his return Iqbal wrote some epoch-making verses like *Shikwā*, *Jawāb-i-Shikwā* and *Sham'a aur Shā'ir*. All these poems display the change in his outlook, but with the exception of the *Sham'a aur Shā'ir* they do not yet give any idea of the message that the poet was to deliver to mankind, a message that was first delivered in *Asrār* and *Rumūz*. The genius had now passed through the formative period, had found the most suitable means of expression and the perplexity had disappeared. Iqbal now became one of the prophets and henceforth he sang only of God and of immortality. *Asrār* and *Rumūz* are both masterpieces and very few literatures of the world can produce many poems to match these. But from the artistic point of view even these masterpieces lacked the magic of the poems which were to follow, and so it is safe to put the dividing line in 1918, the year which saw the publication of *Rumūz*. In the poems published after *Rumūz* there is complete equipoise between poet and prophet, and poetry and philosophy are perfectly wedded. Actually the poetic genius also comes to full maturity after *Rumūz*, and we are reminded of the words of Coleridge: 'No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher.' In 1921 appeared *Khidr-i-Rāb*, and in 1922 *Tulū'-i-Islām*; the former still shows signs of a quest but the latter breathes only hope and faith. Both these poems are in Urdu and are the finest poems in *Bāng-i-Dirā*, under which title Iqbal published his first collection of Urdu verses. After the publication of these poems appeared *Payām-i-Mashriq* or *The Message of the East*. The book is a collection of miscellaneous verses in Persian and was written in response to Goethe's *West Östlicher Divan*. All the poems in *Payām-i-Mashriq* show a supreme artistry and a perfect command over the language, which is the latest Persian to which no Persian can take exception. *Payām-i-Mashriq* was followed two years later by *Zabūr-i-'Ajam* or *Psalms of 'Ajam*. The book contains mystic, vitalising and ennobling verses. *Zabūr-i-'Ajam* was followed by *Jāvid Nāmāh* which can be regarded as Iqbal's *magnum opus*. It is an *Oriental Divine Comedy* and in it Iqbal has beautifully expressed



his thoughts on the various problems that confront men in daily life. Iqbal says about the book:

آنچه گفتم از جهانے دیگر است  
این کتاب از آسمانے دیگر است

What I have described is another world,  
This book is about a different firmament!

The poem will rank among the world's classics with Homer's *Iliad*, Kālidāsa's *Shākuntala*, Firdausi's *Shāh Nāmāh*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Goethe's *Faust*. While the central idea of the poem is vital and creative and Iqbal elucidates eternal truths and discusses most delicate questions affecting mankind, he does this all so artistically that the great epic does not contain a single line in which heaviness of thought has in any way infected the verse.

After finishing the *Jāvid Nāmāh*, Iqbal turned to Urdu again, and published a collection of Urdu poems, *Bāl-i-Jibra'il*, in 1935, and another collection, *Darb-i-Kalīm*, in 1936. In 1934 he had also published a Persian poem, *Musāfir*. Another Persian poem *Pas chai bāyad kard* appeared in 1936. The final collection of his poems, containing poems in Urdu as well as Persian and called *Armughān-i-Hijāz*, appeared posthumously.

Iqbal's place in literature is certainly amongst the greatest, both as a poet and as a prose-writer, but his contribution to human thought is equally great. His biographers will have to unfold two fascinating stories: one about the development of his literary genius and the other about the growth of his thought. It will be quite easy to trace the story of the development of his poetic genius, as his poetry provides sufficient material for it, and all that is needed is a student endowed with a critical faculty, wide enough to grasp the extensive range of his poetry, catholic enough to appreciate new points of view, and penetrating enough to understand the real meaning of all that he has written.

But it will not be so easy to study the development of his thought or to unfold the story of the mental conflict that he passed through. We have his article in *The Indian Antiquary* to show that he was thinking of a superman as early as 1902. His

early poems breathed a spirit of stress and struggle, and as we have seen this belief in the importance of struggle was transformed into a faith during his stay in the West. His feelings towards nationalism crystallised into a definite aversion after seeing what excesses were perpetrated in its name every day in Europe. So much is clear. But we have no conclusive evidence to show as to when he thought out his philosophy of the ego.

The following letter from Dr McTaggart written in 1920 will throw some light on the subject: 'I am writing to tell you with how much pleasure I have been reading your poems (*Sĕcrets of the Self*). Have you not changed your position very much? Surely in the days when we used to talk philosophy together, you were much more of a pantheist and mystic. For my own part, I adhere to my own belief that selves are the ultimate reality, but as to their true content and their true good, my position is as it was; that is, to be found in eternity and not in time, and in love rather than in action.' This shows that Iqbal still believed in pantheistic Sūfism when he left Cambridge in 1908. His poem *Asrār-i-Khūdī*, published in 1915, must have been written about 1914. Thus Iqbal must have developed his philosophy between 1908 and 1914.

A reference to Iqbal's philosophy is also contained in his poem *Sham'a aur Shā'ir* which was published in 1912. Thus the years of conflict are really from 1908 to 1912. These years were momentous years, and the development of Iqbal's thought in these years will prove a most interesting study. There is the statement of 'Alī Bakhsh that on the day Iqbal resigned his professorship in the Government College, he said: 'Alī Bakhsh, I have a message for my people, and it could not be conveyed if I remained in Government service. So I have resigned the service, and I hope that I will be able to carry out my wish now.' This happened sometime in 1911. Is it possible that Iqbal had already got over the great mental conflict? Had he worked out his entire philosophy or had he as yet only caught a faint gleam of it? It is hoped that somebody will trace the story of the development of Iqbal's thought on these lines.

✓ In 1922 a knighthood was conferred upon him, and there is an interesting story behind it. It is said that a European visitor came to Lahore and stayed at Government House. He had heard people reciting Iqbal's poems in Central Asia and so was eager to meet Iqbal during his stay in Lahore. His Excellency the Governor

invited Iqbal to Government House and introduced him to his guest. The two enjoyed the meeting and discussed literature, philosophy and the arts. After Iqbal's departure, the guest expressed his surprise that the Indian Government had done nothing to honour so great a man as Iqbal. The Governor, who had no idea of Iqbal's wide learning and great popularity, immediately sent up a proposal for his knighthood and it was duly approved.<sup>1</sup>

Iqbal was one of the most charming conversationalists, and his talk was always adapted to the interests of his audience. At one moment he would be discussing the Theory of Relativity, at the next the art of wrestling. His vivacious talk, which he could carry on for hours, was as free from the artifice of conscious wit as it was from the vulgarities of gossip. Scintillating ideas poured forth in endless succession, and there was never a note of malice or a touch of personal animus in his talk. His ready wit never lost its sparkle even during his last days. His accessibility was proverbial, and his visitors included men from all grades of society. Referring to Winckelmann, Goethe once told Eckermann, 'One learns nothing from him, but one becomes something.' Those who listened to Iqbal left his presence conscious not only of having become something but also of having learnt a good deal. His sweetness of manner and good nature were most remarkable, and he was a very pleasant companion for all those whose minds were capable of elevation. Just as he was always ready to welcome everybody at his home, so he replied with great promptitude to all letters received by him, irrespective of whether the correspondent was known to him or not. Many people used to wonder how a busy man like Iqbal found time to reply to every letter he received. Amongst his correspondents could be numbered dictators like Mussolini, kings like Nādir Shāh, scholars and philosophers like McTaggart and Nicholson.

His simple nature endeared Iqbal to all those with whom he came in contact, and he had a knack of making friends. As a matter of fact, making friends was one of his methods of elevating those with whom he came in contact. While he had numerous

<sup>1</sup> This account of the conferment of knighthood on Iqbal is based on a note by Sir Abdul Qādir in *The Great Men of India*. It has been recently corroborated in important details by Mirza Jalālud-Dīn of Lahore, a great friend of Iqbal, who actually drove Iqbal to Government House on the day he met the European visitor.



friends in all countries and in all grades of society, his intimacy with Girāmī, the poet from Hoshiarpur, needs special mention. Girāmī was a poet of the old school, and to him must go the credit for having been one of the first to recognise Iqbal's poetic genius and mission. Girāmī is the author of the well-known couplet:

در دیده معنی نگران حضرت اقبال  
 پیغمبری کرد و پیغمبر نتوان گفت

In the eyes of those who know the secret of things,  
 Iqbal performed a prophet's mission, yet he cannot  
 be called a prophet.

Iqbal and Girāmī, although differing widely in the quality of their genius, remained attached to each other till the end.

Apart from journeys connected with professional or political work, and trips to Kashmir and hill-stations undertaken for rest, he never travelled much. Once when he was invited to attend an educational conference, refusing the invitation, he wrote back: 'In these days of turmoil I regard my home as Noah's Ark.' But in 1928 he undertook a journey to Southern India, and among other places visited Madras, Mysore, Hyderabad, Seringapatam and Aligarh. He delivered a course of lectures at Madras, Hyderabad and Aligarh which were afterwards published under the title, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.

There is a small incident which deserves mention as it serves to illustrate Iqbal's generous nature. When the late King Nādir Shāh was passing through Lahore on his way to Afghanistan, Iqbal went to see him at the railway station. Iqbal took the king on one side, and asked him if he needed any money for the great expedition on which he was proceeding. The king, knowing that Iqbal himself did not possess an over-abundance of wealth, was taken aback by this question and replied: 'You are a poor man and I cannot take any money from you.' Iqbal remarked, 'I am poor, but I am sure I have more money than you. Could you let me know how much money you have?' Nādir Shāh had to confess that he had very little, in fact not more than a few hundred rupees. Thereupon Iqbal said: 'I have five thousand rupees and you can have these if you like.' Whether Nādir Shāh accepted the offer or not is not

known, but the incident throws great light on Iqbal's generous character. He was so concerned about the disturbances in Afghanistan that he was willing to give his all to the man who was going to restore order in that unhappy country.

During his visits to Europe in 1931 and 1932 he met, among others, the renowned French philosopher Henri Bergson in Paris. When Iqbal repeated to him the Tradition 'Don't vilify Time' the old French philosopher, although suffering from paralysis, jumped from his invalid chair. On his way back Iqbal visited Spain and saw most of the Arab buildings there. He also went to Jerusalem to attend the Islamic Conference. This visit made him keen on visiting other Islamic countries in order to study the mental conflict through which they were passing. But unfortunately this wish could not be realised.

#### THE EDUCATIONIST

Iqbal's educational philosophy has already been dealt with in an illuminating sketch by a well-known and eminent educationist,<sup>1</sup> but the part played by him directly as an educational reformer still remains to be described. As we have seen above, he was closely connected with the Punjab Educational Department for a number of years, teaching such different subjects as English and Arabic literatures and Philosophy. In London he taught Arabic for six months. Even after the cessation of his connection with the Educational Department, he continued to exercise a great influence over the affairs of the Punjab University by working on various bodies connected with it. For years he was Dean of the Faculty of Oriental Studies and Chairman of the Department of Philosophical Studies. He was closely connected with the Islamia College, Lahore, for years. During the sessions of the Round Table Conference in London he worked on the various committees connected with educational reforms. In 1933 he was invited by the Afghan Government to visit Kabul and advise them on educational reforms in Afghanistan in general and the administration of Kabul University in particular. Most of the reforms suggested by him have been carried out by the Afghan Government. He took great interest in the Jami'ā-Millia of Delhi and was

<sup>1</sup> K. G. Saiyaidain: *Iqbal's Educational Philosophy*. Published by Ashraf, Lahore, 1953.

always ready to help its promoters in every possible way. Thus it will be seen that he has left a permanent impression on three important Universities of the East: Kabul, the Punjab, and the Jami'ā-Millia.

As a teacher he was very popular with his students and always took great interest in their welfare.

#### THE LAWYER

Iqbal practised as a lawyer from 1908 to 1934, when ill health compelled him to give up the practice. Law is reputed to be a jealous mistress, and it is very difficult to attain eminence unless one is prepared to give undivided attention and time. That a man with such multifarious activities could not possibly give his undivided attention to the legal profession was a foregone conclusion, but the fact that in spite of these activities he continued for most of his life to earn his living from it is a credit even to his versatile genius. Apart from the heavy toll his various activities as poet, writer, thinker, politician, etc., levied on his time, we have to remember that Iqbal never wanted to make a fortune out of law. His aim was to earn enough to live on, and it is said that he used to take only as many cases as brought him enough for this. But that cannot detract from his merits as a lawyer. He brought to his profession a profound knowledge of law and a great conscientiousness and thoroughness. These qualities were enough to enable him to climb the greatest heights in the profession if he had chosen to do so. Once when a friend asked him if, in the midst of his many activities, he did not often forget about his legal engagements, he related a story: 'One day,' said Iqbal, 'when I was sitting in the Bar Library, a client came running to me and said that his case was being taken up by the judge. I told him that the case was fixed for some other day. But the client insisted on my going to the court room. So I went up to the judge and drew his attention to the fact that the case was not fixed for that day. The judge then sent for the papers and discovered that the case had been taken up that day through a mistake on the part of the clerk of the court, and was really fixed for another day.' This little incident serves to illustrate that, poet and philosopher as he was, Iqbal took a keen interest in his professional work. Still, it must be admitted that he never succeeded in reach-

ing the highest pinnacles of the profession, and for obvious reasons never commanded a large practice.

As a lawyer he was always upright and honest, and would never accept a case in which he was sure that he could not be of any help to his client.

#### THE POLITICIAN<sup>1</sup>

The important role that Iqbal played in the political life of the subcontinent, especially as architect of Pakistan, will be appreciated from the following message Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah sent to his son:

To me he was a friend, guide and philosopher, and during the darkest moments through which the Muslim League had to go he stood like a rock, and never flinched one single moment.

In 1927 Iqbal was elected to the Punjab Legislative Assembly and made important contributions to its deliberations. In 1930 he gave evidence before the Simon Commission. In the same year he was selected to preside at the annual session of the Muslim League. It was in his presidential address to the Muslim League at Allahabad that Iqbal elaborated his scheme for the solution of the political deadlock on the subcontinent of India. During the course of his address Iqbal said:

‘Man,’ says Renan, ‘is enslaved neither by his race, nor by his religion, nor by the course of rivers, nor by the direction of mountain ranges. A great aggregation of men, sane of mind and warm of heart, creates a moral consciousness which is called a nation.’ Such a formation is quite possible, though it involves the long and arduous process of practically remaking men and furnishing them with fresh emotional equipment. It might have been a fact in India if the teachings of Kabir and the Divine Faith of Akbar had seized the imagination of the masses of this country. Experience, however, shows that the various caste-units and religious units in India have shown no inclination to sink their respective individualities in a larger whole. Each group is

<sup>1</sup> ‘So that whether or not literature is one thing and politics another, the writer today cannot but be deeply concerned with the direction which politics are taking in his time.’ Philip Henderson: *The Poet and Society*, p. 6.

intensely jealous of its collective existence. The formation of the kind of moral consciousness which constitutes the essence of a nation in Renan's sense demands a price which the peoples of India are not prepared to pay. The unity of an Indian nation, therefore, must be sought, not in the negation, but in the mutual harmony and co-operation of the many. True statesmanship cannot ignore facts, however unpleasant they may be. The only practical course is not to assume the existence of a state of things which does not exist, but to recognise facts as they are, and to exploit them to our greatest advantage. And it is on the discovery of Indian unity in this direction that the fate of India as well as of Asia really depends. India is Asia in miniature. Part of her people have cultural affinities with nations in the east, and part with nations in the middle and west of Asia. If an effective principle of co-operation is discovered in India, it will bring peace and mutual good-will to this ancient land which has suffered so long, more because of her situation in historic space than because of any inherent incapacity of her people. And it will at the same time solve the entire political problem of Asia.

'It is, however, painful to observe that our attempts to discover such a principle of internal harmony have so far failed. Why have they failed? Perhaps we suspect each other's intentions, and inwardly aim at dominating each other. Perhaps in the higher interests of mutual co-operation, we cannot afford to part with the monopolies which circumstances have placed in our hands, and conceal our egoism under the cloak of a nationalism, outwardly simulating a large-hearted patriotism, but inwardly as narrow-minded as a caste or a tribe. Perhaps we are unwilling to recognise that each group has a right to free development according to its own cultural traditions. But whatever may be the causes of our failure, I still feel hopeful.'

Few thought at the time that Iqbal's foresight would lead to the creation of the independent and sovereign state of Pakistan. It may be said that while other people also might have thought that a solution of the political troubles of the subcontinent of India lay in the creation of Pakistan, to Iqbal must go the credit for having been the first to present to the world the scheme as a practical proposition. In a letter of 21 June 1937, to Quaid-i-



Azam Jinnah, after referring to the communal discord prevalent in the country, he wrote:

In these circumstances it is obvious that the only way to a peaceful India is a redistribution of the country on the lines of racial, religious and linguistic affinities. Many British statesmen also realise this, and the Hindu-Muslim riots which are rapidly coming in the wake of this constitution are sure further to open their eyes to the real situation in the country. I remember Lord Lothian telling me, before I left England, that my scheme was the only possible solution of the troubles in India, but that it would take twenty-five years to come.

Actually it took much less for the scheme to assume a practical shape.

In 1931 and 1932 he attended the Round Table Conference which met in London to frame a constitution for the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. He took an active part in the various committees appointed by the Conference and contributed much. In 1932 he presided at the annual session of the Muslim Conference and delivered a thought-provoking address. During the course of this address Iqbal said:

I am opposed to nationalism as it is understood in Europe, not because, if it is allowed to develop in India, it is likely to bring less material gain to Muslims. I am opposed to it because I see in it the germs of atheistic materialism which I look upon as the greatest danger to modern humanity. Patriotism is a perfectly natural virtue and has a place in the moral life of man. Yet that which really matters is a man's faith, his culture, his historical traditions. These are the things, which in my eyes, are worth living for and dying for, and not the piece of earth with which the spirit of man happens to be temporarily associated.

In view of the overwhelming and irrefutable evidence, documentary and otherwise, it should be unnecessary even to refer to attempts that are being made to belittle the part played by Iqbal in the creation of Pakistan. But lately there has been a marked tendency in certain quarters to refer to Iqbal as a failure in the active politics of the times. While it must be admitted that Iqbal was no match for some of the political adventurers and self-seeking professional politicians of the day, with their intrigues and

crooked machinations, it cannot be denied that his integrity, steadfastness and political acumen imparted to the role played by him an importance hardly realised at the time and not fully appreciated even to-day. It is hoped that one day an authoritative dissertation will be published dealing with his political activities and embodying all his political speeches.

#### THE LAST PHASE

Iqbal developed kidney trouble in 1924. For its treatment he intended to visit Vienna, but some friends advised him to consult the well-known Indian physician Ḥakīm ‘Abdul-Wahāb Anṣarī, known as Ḥakīm Nābīnā, ‘the blind physician’, and his treatment cured Iqbal of the kidney trouble. After this he kept in fairly good health till the beginning of 1934, when as a result of exposure he got a throat affection which resulted in loss of voice. The trouble was diagnosed as due to local paralysis of the laryngeal nerves. Every possible treatment was tried in Lahore, Delhi and Bhopal, and at times there were hopes of complete recovery, but these were not realised. During the last phase, his stay in Bhopal, mainly for treatment, deserves special mention, as it served to strengthen the ties of mutual esteem and friendship which characterised his relations with the Nawab of Bhopal, whose munificent treatment reminds us of the relations between the Duke of Weimar and Goethe. At Bhopal Sir Ross and Lady Masood looked after Iqbal with great care and consideration. They did not spare any efforts to make him comfortable. In 1935 he was invited to Oxford as Rhodes lecturer, but ill-health compelled him to refuse this invitation. In 1937 Iqbal developed cataract in his eyes. In spite of periods of comparative good health the last phase was embittered by constant ill-health in the physical sense. But as regards his creative activities this period was the most productive. Till the last Iqbal kept in touch with every question of the day and took great interest in the controversies going on.

Iqbal was a profound student of the Qur’ān. He had devoted a whole lifetime to its study, and wanted to write a book on it. He had collected a number of books from Europe and Egypt for this purpose, and was thinking of calling the book *The Reconstruction of Muslim Jurisprudence*. He started on it, but failing health compelled him to give up writing. It is most unfortunate that

Iqbal's profound and erudite scholarship and lifelong study of the Qur'ān could not assume a tangible form for the benefit of succeeding generations. He himself used to say: 'If I could finish this work I would die peacefully.' As a matter of fact it was as early as 1917 that Iqbal wrote to a friend that he was busy compiling a book on Muslim Jurisprudence which in its exhaustiveness would be on the lines of Imām Sarkhīsī's monumental work *Mabsūt*.<sup>1</sup> It is hoped that the notes left by him on the subject will be carefully preserved and expanded by some scholar. About the same time Iqbal thought of writing *The Book of a Forgotten Prophet* in English, but this work also never assumed any definite form on paper. He continued composing verses till the very end. The last poem was dictated a few days before his death. Those who nursed him say that it seemed that with the decadence of his physical strength his intellect had received a new impetus.

He disliked taking medicines and often used to say that he took them mainly because he did not want his ego to suffer weakening.

His illness took a serious turn on 25 March 1938, and in spite of the best medical aid and careful nursing of his friends, he breathed his last in the early hours of the 21st of April. Half an hour before his death he recited the following verses:

سرود رفتہ ماز آید کہ ناید    نیسے از حجاز آید کہ ناید  
سر آمد روزگار این فقیرے    دگر دانائے راز آید کہ ناید

The departed melody may recur or not!  
The zephyr may blow again from Hijāz or not!  
The days of this Faqīr have come to an end,  
Another seer may come or not!

When dying, Keats said: 'I feel the flowers growing over me.' Byron passed on with the gentle words: 'I must sleep now.' Goethe called for 'more light'. Most moving death phrase of all was that of the deaf composer Beethoven, who said: 'I shall hear in Heaven.' The last word Iqbal uttered was 'Allah'. He lived in God, and died in God. 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.'

<sup>1</sup> See Iqbal's letter to Sir Krishna Prasad of 15 April 1917, in *Shad-Iqbal*. Published by Adbiyat Urdu, Hyderabad (India), 1942.



There are not many clearer cases in the history of mankind of a man born with a mission, of a life irresistibly but unconsciously moving along a pre-ordained path. To attain his mission Iqbal spurned prizes that the world covets. He realised the fundamental truth that man's personality can endure and develop only in an atmosphere of freedom, and it was in preaching fervently to his people this forgotten truism that his greatness lay. We are too near the portent to gauge its meaning or to estimate its influence, but we cannot fail to see in Iqbal one of those great natural forces that shape the destinies of mankind.

The following touching message which the great poet Tagore sent on learning of Iqbal's death deserves quotation: 'The death of Sir Muhammad Iqbal creates a void in literature that like a mortal wound will take a very long time to heal. India, whose place in the world is too narrow, can ill afford to miss a poet whose poetry had such universal value.'

The day before his death Iqbal was visited by an old friend of his student days in Germany, Baron von Veltheim. This visit evoked old memories and Iqbal talked to his old friend a good deal about their stay in Munich. The two discussed poetry, philosophy and politics for over an hour, and those who saw them talking little suspected that the end was so near. When the Baron remarked that his presence might be tiring to Iqbal, he replied: 'It is just the other way. Your breath is like balm to me.' Another striking feature of the last day were the frequent visits to his room by his little daughter, Munira. Once when she left his room, he remarked: 'She instinctively realises that father's death is near at hand.' Here again those who heard these remarks little appreciated their true significance at the moment.

Although his illness was long and protracted the end was sudden and very peaceful. On his death-bed this great poet-prophet presented a picture of peace and composure. It seemed as if he was just resting after finishing his life's work. There was a faint smile playing on his lips and one was irresistibly reminded of his well-known verse:

نشان مرد مومن با تو گویم چو مرگ آید تبسم بر لب اوست

I tell you the sign of a '*Momin*'—

When death comes there is a smile on his lips.

'*Momin*' is Iqbal's term for a superman, and there is no doubt that Iqbal was a superman. He died with a smile on his lips.

He was given a funeral which kings might envy, and his remains were buried near the gate of the historic Shahī Mosque in Lahore, late in the evening, in the presence of thousands of mourners.

Amongst those who nursed Iqbal during the last illness were his admirers and friends Raja Hasan Akhtar, Muhammad Shafī, Nadhīr Niyāzī and Hakīm Qarshī besides his devoted servant 'Alī Bakhsh'. Their names are mentioned because they are entitled to the gratitude of all lovers of Iqbal; besides, humanity is always interested to know the names of those who looked after its great ones during the last days of their earthly existence.

چو رخت خویش بر بستم ازین خاک  
همه گفتند با ما آشنا بود  
ولیکن کس ندانست این مسافر  
چه گفت و با که گفت و از کجا بود

When gathering my chattels I forsook this world,  
All and sundry said: 'We knew him well.'  
Forsooth none knew about this traveller—  
What he said, whom he addressed, whence he hailed.

## *Iqbal's Philosophy of the Ego*

ہیچ کس بازے کہ من گویم نہ گفت  
 ہجو فکر من در معنی نہ سفت  
 سر عیش جاودان خواہی یا  
 ہم زمین ہم آسمان خواہی یا

No one hath told the secret which I will tell  
 Or threaded a pearl of thought like mine.  
 Come, if thou wouldst know the secret of everlasting life!  
 Come, if thou wouldst win both earth and heaven.

PROFESSOR R. A. NICHOLSON of Cambridge has remarked about Iqbal: 'During his stay in the West he studied modern philosophy, in which subject he holds degrees from the Universities of Cambridge and Munich. His dissertation on the development of metaphysics in Persia, an illuminating sketch, appeared as a book in 1908. Since then he has developed a philosophy of his own.'<sup>1</sup> It is not possible to understand Iqbal without first understanding this philosophy. So an attempt will be made here to give a brief outline of his philosophy of the ego.

It has been said that all philosophical systems have their origin in some perplexing problems. When a great intellect encounters a difficult problem and tries to find its solution, the thoughts engendered in these attempts when elaborated form a philosophical

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to *The Secrets of the Self*, p. vii. Macmillan and Co., London, 1920.

system. What was the problem that set Iqbal thinking? When Iqbal finished his studies and began looking round, he found a strident and triumphant<sup>victorious</sup> West riding roughshod over a prostrate East. Towards the close of the nineteenth century, conditions in the East were particularly depressing. The sick-man of Europe was at his last gasp; Persia was being crushed under the weight of two mighty powers and was in such a pitiable condition that her plight moved an American to write *The Strangling of Persia*; Afghanistan was a vassal; Hindustan was not only torn by internal dissensions but was also backward in every respect; China was the cockpit of warring parties. This gloomy picture could not but set an observer like Iqbal thinking. He began looking beyond symptoms for the root-cause of the evil. It did not take him long to diagnose the disease. His deep and wide knowledge of sociology and the history of different cultures convinced him that the main responsibility for Oriental decadence lay at the door of those philosophical systems which inculcated self-negation, abnegation and self-abandonment. These systems instead of buoying man up to overcome the difficulties of life, weakened his moral fibre by teaching him to seek peace in running away from the difficulties, so that higher prizes in another world might be available to him.

Most of the important religious systems of the world can be divided into two groups: Indian and Semitic. All religious systems which originated in Hindustan preferred ascetic inaction to a life of stress and struggle.<sup>1</sup> Of the Semitic religions somehow or other Christianity and Judaism came to adopt a similar outlook very early in their history. But early in the seventh century there appeared in Western Asia a religious system essentially practical in outlook and dynamic in thought. The kernel of its teachings lay in action. In course of time this system, whose main teachings

<sup>1</sup> In case these remarks about Indian religions should be misunderstood we would like to quote a Hindu writer. Professor M. Hirayana says in his *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* (p. 24): 'These are the two elements common to all Indian thought: the pursuit of Moksha as the final ideal and the ascetic spirit of the discipline recommended for its attainment.' Discussing the Visistadvaita the same author says (p. 412): 'As in the other Indian systems Moksha is conceived here also as freedom from mundane existence.' A European author, Mrs Sinclair Stevenson, says: 'Like Buddhism and Brahmanism, Jainism might be defined as a way of escape, not from death but from life, but unlike either of them, it hopes to escape not into nothingness nor into absorption but in a state of being without qualities, emotions or relations, and removed from the possibility of rebirth.' *The Heart of Jainism*, p. 89.

were based on the gospel of action, also became corrupted, and under the impact of alien thought, mostly Hellenic, began subscribing to the theory of self-negation and self-effacement. [Iqbal's wide studies in history, sociology and philosophy convinced him that the decadent condition of Islam was due to the importation of neo-Platonic ideas, which regarded the world as a mere illusion not worth striving for.] These ideas corresponded in an unusual degree to those based on the Vedānta, and found their culmination in Islam in the doctrine of *Wahdat-al-Wujūd* or unityism. This doctrine led one to believe in God as immanent and regarded the whole world merely as an emanation. Thus a pantheistic deity was substituted for the personal and transcendent God of Islam. Much of what passed under the name of mysticism was actually dope, whose only object was to make men spurn a life of activity and exertion.

Ideas based on this doctrine sapped the energies of the people. They encouraged men to run away from the difficulties of life instead of <sup>to struggle</sup> grappling with them, and <sup>produce</sup> engendered a feeling of other-worldliness which led people to take delight in spending all their time in thinking of the joys of Nirvāna. Life came to be regarded as a mere illusion, and nothing in life seemed worth striving for. These thoughts led in due course to an elaborate but ill-conceived system of pseudo-mysticism which produced men about whom a Western scholar has remarked that, [as citizens they are undeniably a grave scandal and a useless burden to the State; they sap the national prosperity and demoralise the national character'.<sup>1</sup>] It is not proposed here to trace the history of Sūfism in Islam, but it must be remarked that the doctrine of unityism was first elaborated by [the Spanish mystic, Shaikh Muḥyid-Dīn Ibnul 'Arabī, popularly known as Shaikh-ul-Akbar.] When writing his commentary on the Qur'ān, he approached the subject from the same angle from which Shri Shankaracharya had interpreted the Gītā. According to Ibnul 'Arabī: [There is nothing but God, nothing in existence other than He; there is not even a "there" where the essence of all things is one.]<sup>2</sup> Gradually this doctrine, which corresponds to Vedantism as interpreted by Shankara-

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Nicholson: *Introduction to the translation of Diwān-i-Shams-i Tabriz*. Cambridge University Press, 1898.

<sup>2</sup> *Futūḥāt*, p. 884, quoted by Dr A. E. Affifi, in *The Mystical Philosophy of Ibnul 'Arabī*, p. 55.



chārya, came to be accepted by the generality of mystics all over the Islamic world and pantheistic ideas became so absorbed in Islam that in the fourteenth century they formed the common theme of most Islamic poetry. All this only served to paralyse capacity for action amongst the people.<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of unityism was assailed by several Muslim thinkers, notably Ibn-Taymiyya and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī; but they all attacked the doctrine merely as an article of faith for purely theological reasons, and while volumes were being written by both sides, the poison generated by these ideas was infecting the very roots of the Islamic body-politic. Iqbal assailed the doctrine on practical grounds. It is a proof of his originality of thought that he traced the connection between the doctrine of unityism and the decadence which characterised all Eastern people in general and Islamic people in particular. Undaunted by the extent to which the poison from these ideas had worked into the intellectual and psychological life of all Eastern people, Iqbal came forth to challenge the existing ideas by proclaiming that life is real and not a mere illusion. He asks 'What then is life?' and answers 'It is individual: its highest form so far is the Ego (Khūdī) in which the individual becomes a self-contained exclusive centre.' According to Iqbal there is a gradually rising note of egohood in the whole Universe. We are conscious of this in our own self, in Nature before us and in the ultimate principle of all life, the Ultimate Ego. Starting with the individual ego as a centre of will and energy he develops his philosophy: his conception of God, the individual's freedom, will and immortality. Every object possesses an individuality and in the scale of life the status of every object is fixed according to the extent it develops

<sup>1</sup> Lest these remarks about Ibnul 'Arabī should be resented by those who hold the Shaikh in great reverence, it should be made clear that for us Ibnul 'Arabī personifies that school of Sūfis in Islam who preached that the relation between the world and God was one of identity and on the basis of this doctrine promulgated a life of ascetic inaction. There are some scholars who maintain that Ibnul 'Arabī did not preach this. Without any desire to enter into a controversy, the following remarks of a research scholar are given as they will be found interesting: 'As to the relation between the world and God, Ibnul 'Arabī holds that it is one of identity. In bringing out this identification he proceeds either from the negation of the world or from the affirmation of God. Proceeding from the negation of the world Ibnul 'Arabī holds that the world as such is merely nominal, unreal, imaginary, objectively non-existent, and that God alone exists.' Dr B. A. Fārūqī: *The Mujaddid's Conception of Tawhīd*, p. 91. Ashraf, Lahore, 1940.

its individuality and gains mastery over the environment. Individuality attains highest development in man and here it becomes personality.

Physically as well as spiritually man is a self-contained centre, but he is not yet a complete individual. The greater his distance from God the less his individuality. He who comes nearest to God is the completest person. Not that he is finally absorbed in God. On the other hand he absorbs God into himself. The true person not only absorbs the world of matter, by mastering it he absorbs God Himself into his ego. Life is a forward assimilative movement. It removes all obstructions in its march by assimilating them. Its essence is the continual creation of desires and ideals, and for the purpose of its preservation and expansion it has invented or developed out of itself certain instruments, *e.g.*, senses, intellect, etc., which help to assimilate obstructions. The greatest obstacle in the way of life is matter, Nature; yet Nature is not evil, since it enables the inner powers of life to unfold themselves. The ego attains to freedom by the removal of all obstructions in its way. It is partly free, partly determinate, and reaches full freedom by approaching the individual who is most free—God.<sup>1</sup>

According to Iqbal the characteristics of the ego are these:

- (i) It is not space-bound in the sense in which the body is.
- (ii) True time-duration belongs to it alone.
- (iii) It is essentially private and unique.

بیکر هستی ز آثار خودی است

هر چه می بینی ز اسرار خودی است

خوشتن را چون خودی بیدار کرد

آشکارا عالم پندار کرد

صد جهان پوشیده اندر ذات او

<sup>1</sup> Iqbal's letter quoted by Professor R. A. Nicholson in the Introduction to *The Secrets of the Self*, p. xv.

نغمه زو پیدا است از اثبات او  
 سازد از خود پیکر انیسار را  
 تا فرزاید لذت پیکار را  
 چون حیات عالم از زور خودی است  
 پس بقدر استواری زندگی است  
 چون زمین بر هستی خود محکم است  
 ماه پابند طواف پیهم است  
 هستی مهر از زمین محکم تر است  
 پس زمین مسحور چشم خاور است

The form of existence is an effect of the Self;  
 Whatsoever thou seest is a secret of the Self;  
 When the Self awoke to consciousness,  
 It revealed the universe of Thought.  
 A hundred worlds are hidden in its essence:  
 Self-affirmation brings Not-self to light.  
 By the Self the seed of opposition is sown in the  
 world:  
 It imagines itself to be other than itself.  
 It makes from itself the forms of others  
 In order to multiply the pleasure of strife.  
 Inasmuch as the life of the universe comes from  
 the power of the Self,  
 Life is in proportion to this power.  
 Because the earth is firmly based on itself,  
 The captive moon goes round it constantly.  
 The being of the sun is stronger than that of the  
 earth:  
 Therefore is the earth fascinated by the sun's eye.

Life, according to Iqbal, is a forward assimilative process, and its essence is the continual creation of desires and ideals. The creation of new desires and ideals tends to create a state of constant tension. 'Personality is a state of tension and can continue



only if that state is maintained. If the state of tension is not maintained relaxation will ensue. Since personality or the state of tension is the most valuable achievement of man, he should see that he does not revert to a state of relaxation. That which tends to maintain the state of tension tends to make us immortal.' <sup>1</sup> Thus the human ego has a definite mission on earth in two main directions. In the first place it has to struggle with its environment and to conquer it. By this conquest it attains freedom and approaches God, who is the most free individual. In the second place the ego has to maintain a constant state of tension and thereby attains immortality. By attaining freedom and immortality the ego conquers Space on the one hand and Time on the other.

But in addition to attaining freedom and immortality the ego has to help in the upward march of humanity by leading to the birth of a higher type of man—the Superman or Perfect Man—who is the ideal to which all life aspires.

This is the <sup>main point</sup> gist of Iqbal's philosophy of the ego. It is clear that the basis of this philosophy is a strong faith in the evolution of man in three directions—Personal Freedom, Personal Immortality and Production of Supermen. How is this evolution on three planes to be attained? By <sup>the process of</sup> fortifying personality. Man must follow all that tends to fortify personality and must avoid all that is likely to weaken it. As Iqbal says, 'The idea of personality gives us a standard of value: it settles the problem of good and evil. That which fortifies personality is good, that which weakens it is bad. Art, religion and ethics must be judged from the standpoint of personality.'

Thus it will be seen that it is of the highest importance in the evolution of man to study the factors and forces which fortify the human ego or personality. According to Iqbal these are:

- ✓ (i) Love.
- (ii) *Faqr*, which can be best described by the expression 'supreme indifference to the <sup>retribution</sup> rewards the world has to offer'.
- (iii) Courage.
- (iv) Tolerance.
- (v) *Kasb-i-halāl*, which can be best translated as 'living on lawful earnings'.
- (vi) Taking part in original and creative activities.

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to *The Secrets of the Self*, p. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

The following remarks will serve to elucidate the nature of these factors:

(i) *Love*. For Iqbal, Love connotes far more than the bringer of a purely individual joy. To him, Love is the regenerating spirit of the Universe, the spirit that should cut the Gordian knot of all man's perplexities and provide an antidote to all human vices. Love brings forth beautiful things and thoughts into this world. To him love for an individual means the assimilation and absorption of the qualities prominent in the beloved. No words can convey a complete picture of Love as he understood it, although he has himself described it again and again in prose and poetry. All those descriptions placed together give some idea of this great force in the affairs of men, but considerations of space preclude our attempting that here. Referring to it he says in a letter to Professor Nicholson, "This word is used in a very wide sense and means the desire to assimilate, to absorb. Its highest form is the creation of values and ideals and the endeavour to realise them. Love individualises the lover as well as the beloved. The effort to realise the most unique individuality individualises the seeker and implies individuality of the sought, for nothing else would satisfy the nature of the seeker." <sup>1</sup> Iqbal has described the connection between Love and the Ego in these lines:

نقطہ نورے کہ نام او خودی است زیر خاک ما شرار زندگی است  
از محبت می شود پائنده تر زنده تر سو زنده تر تابنده تر  
کیمیا پیدا کن از مشت گلے بوسه زن بر آستان کاغذ  
کیفیت باخیزد از صباے عشق هست هم تقلید از اسماء عشق  
عاشقی محکم شو از تقلید یار تا کند تو شود یزدان شکار

The luminous point whose name is the Self  
Is the life-spark beneath our dust.  
By love it is made more lasting,  
More living, more burning, more glowing.  
Transmute thy handful of earth into gold,  
Kiss the threshold of a Perfect Man.

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to *The Secrets of the Self*, p. xviii.

From the wine of Love spring many spiritual qualities:  
 Amongst the attributes of Love is blind devotion.  
 Be a lover constant in devotion to the beloved,  
 That thou mayst cast thy noose and capture God.

Poets in all languages, mystics in all countries and metaphysicians in all religions have stressed the importance of Love in the development of human character, and they have described what they understand by Love in beautiful language; but rarely has anyone laid so much stress on Love as a factor in the development of human personality or used the term Love in such a wide sense as Iqbal. In Eastern literatures the nearest approach to his is perhaps that of the great mystic poet, Maulānā Rūmī.

The following beautiful passage from Thomas-à-Kempis will give Western readers an idea, however incomplete, of what Iqbal understands by Love:

Love feels no burden, thinks nothing of trouble, attempts what is above its strength, pleads no excuse of impossibility; for it thinks all things lawful for itself and all things possible. It is therefore able to undertake all things, and it completes many things, and brings them to a conclusion, where he who does not love, faints and lies down.

(ii) *Faqr*. It is impossible to find a proper word for *Faqr* in English. It is difficult enough for Oriental readers to explain what Iqbal means by this term, but for Western readers, not versed in Oriental methods of expressing thought, it is wellnigh impossible to grasp the true meaning of this expressive word. By *Faqr* Iqbal means the disdain for the rewards which this world, or the next, has to offer and which the majority of mankind covet. *Faqr* indicates that attitude of mind which enables a man to strive, spurning all delights and all rewards except the attainment of worthy ends. In the usually accepted sense of the term, it means 'poverty' or 'indigence', and a *Faqīr* is one who lives on other people's alms and favours. Thus the term has acquired a meaning repulsive in the extreme, but it is obvious that one who attaches such importance to the development of man's personality cannot possibly extol such a soul-destroying action. This makes it all the more imperative for us to understand what Iqbal actually means by the term *Faqr*. According to Iqbal, the term means an attitude of complete detachment and superiority to one's material posses-

sions. As such it provides a shield against the temptations which beset one in the world. A *Faqir* works for a noble cause, not with any ulterior motives but just for the pleasure which striving in a noble cause gives him. Iqbal has given a definition of *Faqir* in the following lines:

اک فقر سکھاتا ہے صیاد کو پنجیری  
 اک فقر سے کھلتے ہیں اسرارِ جمانگیری  
 اک فقر سے قوموں میں مسکینی و دلگیری  
 اک فقر سے مٹی میں خاصیت اکسیری

One Faqr teaches the hunter the art of hunting,  
 One Faqr teaches the secrets of world conquest,  
 One Faqr brings to nations poverty and dejection,  
 One Faqr imparts to clay the qualities of elixir.

Again pointing to the stifling effects of riches and material possessions he says:

اب ترا دور بھی آنے کو ہے اے فقر غمخور  
 کھا گئی روح فرنگی کو ہوائے زرو و سیم

O self-respecting *Faqir*, your time is fast coming;  
 The greed for gold and silver has sapped the spirit of  
 Western nations.

Churchill, in his sketch of T. E. Lawrence, has incidentally described *Faqir*, and the description is quoted below as it will serve to elucidate this term:

Part of the secret of this stimulating ascendancy lay, of course, in his disdain for most of the prizes, the pleasures and comforts of life. The world naturally looks with some awe upon a man who appears unconcernedly indifferent to home, money, comfort, rank or even power and fame. The world feels, not without a certain apprehension, that there is someone outside its

jurisdiction, someone before whom its allurements may be spread in vain.<sup>1</sup>

It is not easy to improve upon this description of a *Faqir*. The keynote to a *Faqir's* character is his utter unselfishness. He works for the world's good without thought of personal reward, here or hereafter. In the words of Bernard Shaw put into Barbara's mouth: "I have got rid of the bribe of heaven. Let God's work be done for its own sake: the work He had to create us to do because it cannot be done except by living men and women."<sup>2</sup> It is obvious that only those gifted with supreme vision are capable of utter disregard for the rewards; and it is only such people who leave a permanent mark on the affairs of the world.

قلمو من چیست؟ تسخیر جہات  
بندہ از تاثیر او مولا صفات

What is a *Momin's Faqr*? Conquest of time and space;  
It endows a slave with the attributes of the master!

(iii) *Courage*. Without courage, physical and moral, it is impossible for man to achieve anything really important in this world. All progress means encountering obstacles, which only serve to draw the best out of those possessing courage. It is only the weak who succumb. For the courageous, obstacles only serve to develop character and to bring forth potential virtues. They can be pierced, gashed and torn, but this will only fortify their determination—to triumph over fear. There is no failure of nerve, no submission to forces of evil, no yielding except to conviction. Demonstration of force has no effect on the courageous, who bow only to the wishes of God:

عشق را آتش زن اندیشه کن  
رو به حق باش و شیری پیشه کن

<sup>1</sup> Winston Churchill: *Great Contemporaries*, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> *Major Barbara*, Act III.



Let Love burn all thy doubts,  
Be subservient only to truth which will turn thee into a lion.

Again and again Iqbal impresses upon the younger generation the fact that the royal road to success in life lies in 'living dangerously', defying all powers which tend to obstruct the enjoyment of legitimate rights:

آئین جواں مرداں حق گوئی و بجے باکی  
اللہ کے شیروں کو آتی نہیں رو باہی

The code for men of courage is truth and fearlessness,  
God's lions know not the cunning of a fox.

Courage does not consist merely in facing manfully physical dangers. There is greater courage in not losing faith in one's standard of values when things go wrong and people deride one's ideals. There is still greater courage required in facing misrepresentation at the hands of friends and foes. In these times of stress and torment, courage provides a sheet-anchor for human character, a pivot round which other virtues revolve.

How beautifully writes Barrie:

Courage is the thing. All goes if courage goes. What says our glorious Johnson of courage: 'Unless a man has that virtue he has no security for preserving many others. We thank our Creator three times daily for courage instead of for our bread, which, if we work, is surely the one thing we have a right to claim of Him. This courage is a proof of our immortality, greater even than gardens when the eve is cool.' Pray for it. Who rises from prayer a better man, his prayer is answered.

(iv) *Tolerance*. Tolerance for other people's views and manners represents strength of a high order, and its cultivation is beneficial to any human society. It is obvious that if every member of a group is to develop his individuality to the fullest extent, intolerance will only lead to perpetual quarrels and conflicts. So the ego must develop tolerance, which in its turn tends to fortify the ego. As Iqbal has remarked: 'The principle of the ego-sustaining

deed is respect for the ego in myself as well as in others.' <sup>1</sup> Thus tolerance sustains and strengthens the human ego. In fact the tolerance itself is born of strength, not weakness. Iqbal lays great emphasis on the development of tolerance:

حرف بد را برب آوردن خطاست  
 کافر و مومن همه خلق خداست  
 آدمیت احترام آدمی  
 با خبر شو از مقام آدمی  
 بنده عشق از خدا گیرد طریق  
 می شود بر کافر و مومن شفیق

It is wrong to utter a bad word;  
 The infidel as well as the faithful are God's creations;  
 Humanity consists in respect for man;  
 So acquaint thyself with the dignity of man;  
 The man of Love takes his guidance from God  
 And is kind to the infidel and to the faithful alike.

But it may be remarked that the tolerance Iqbal preaches is in fact the tolerance of a man of strong faith who, possessing his cherished convictions, realises the respect he owes to those of others.

(v) *Kasb-i-halāl*. This is a very expressive and inclusive phrase with such wide applications that it can guide human conduct in all spheres of human activity. Translated literally the phrase means 'lawful acquisition'; this in the language of jurists and orthodox theologians includes all acquisition not acquired by foul means like cheating, fraud or theft. But according to Iqbal the phrase has a wider meaning, and means acquiring things or ideas solely through one's personal effort and struggle. This means prescribing for all egos a life of active effort and struggle, and totally excludes all thoughts of self-renunciation. Enjoying anything

<sup>1</sup> *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 113. Oxford University Press, 1934.

which has not been acquired by work is bad for the ego, so much so that even acquiring anything by inheritance is also outside *kasb-i-halāl*. Iqbal says:

نہیمان شو اگر بعلیٰ زمیراث پدرخواہی  
کجائیش برون آوردن بعلیٰ کہ در سنگ است

Be āshamed if you want to inherit a ruby from your forebears;  
This cannot give the pleasure that lies in quarrying a ruby.

Similarly all borrowed ideas are to be religiously avoided.

ز خاک خویش طلب آتش کہ پیدا نیست  
تجلی دگرے در خور تقاضا نیست

Get from your own dust the fire that is not visible,  
Because the light of others is not worth having.

(vi) *Creative and original activity*. We have seen that by extolling *kasb-i-halāl* Iqbal enjoins a life of activity for the ego to attain proper development. Now he goes further and lays down that all activity must be creative and original if the ego is to be sustained and fortified. Mimicry and imitation are of no avail and must be definitely discouraged:

تقلید سے ناکارہ نہ کر اپنی خودی کو  
کر اس کی حفاظت کہ یہ گوہر ہے یگانہ

DemEAN not thy personality by imitation;  
Guard it, as it is a priceless jewel.

He lays great stress on creativeness, and refers to the Qur'ān, which expressly mentions creators besides God. In fact, according to Iqbal, the difference between a believer and an infidel is not one of theological belief or disbelief, but is constituted in the primal



fact that while a believer is a creator, an infidel is not. He makes God say:

هر که او را قوت تخیلق نیست  
پیش ما جز کافر و زندیق نیست

One who does not possess creative power,  
To us is naught but an infidel and a heretic.

Originality and creativeness are not given to us in equal measure; still, every ego has an urge to create, which is stultified by adverse factors—either by our defective educational system or by mistaken authority. To fortify itself the ego must remove these adverse factors and persist in creative and original efforts. The creative element in man raises him to the divine plane; frustration of the creative impulse distorts human character. Failure in any creative effort signifies nothing, the mere attempt is dynamic and creative.

Having understood the forces which tend to fortify personality we have to consider the influences which lead to its weakening. These are given below:

- (i) Fear.
- (ii) Beggary (*su'āl*).
- (iii) Slavery.
- (iv) Pride of extraction.

We will deal with all these influences briefly.

(i) *Fear*. As we know, fear in its different aspects, such as worry, anxiety, anger, jealousy and timidity, is the greatest enemy of the human race. Of all the influences retarding human growth, fear has robbed man of more efficiency and happiness, has made more cowards, and more people failures than any other influence. Fear produces all sorts of unhealthy and abnormal emotional developments in man, which warp his nature and stultify his moral growth. The schools of modern psychologists led by Freud, Jung and Adler have investigated the far-reaching effects of fear on human nature, and their researches have clearly demonstrated that most of the abnormalities in men, the bully, the coward, the tyrant and the dictator, have their origin in suppressed fear.

The talented Turkish authoress, Halidé Edib, has remarked in her book, *Inside India*: 'The release of the child's mind from fear in the East is of primary importance. Home life, school life, civic life, all used to train him by fear. The blessed rod, or the Unseen Spirit, followed him from the cradle to the grave. . . . Parents, teachers, rulers, native or foreign, have mostly used Fear. Strike, strike, strike . . . The result is either the coward and the bullied individual with all sorts of unhealthy inhibitions, or the bully himself, when he gets a chance. . . .' <sup>1</sup> Hence it is essential that the ego should overcome the paralysing effects of fear, before attaining full growth.

اے کہ در زندان غم باشی اسیر از نبی تعلیم لا تنحزت بگیر  
 گر خدا داری ز غم آزاد شو از خیال بیش و کم آزاد شو  
 قوت ایمان حیات افزایدت ورد لا خوف علیہم بایدت  
 چون کلیجے سوئی فرعونے رود قلب او از لا تنحز محکم شود  
 بیم غیر اللہ عمل را دشمن است کاروان زندگی را رہزن است  
 ہر کہ رمز مصطفیٰ نمیدہ است شرک را در خوف مضمر دیدہ است

O thou who art a prisoner in the prison of worry,  
 Learn from the Prophet the lesson of 'Grieve not'.  
 If thou hast a god, get rid of worry;  
 Get rid of the idea of profit and loss.  
 Strength of faith adds to life;  
 One should recite continually 'Fear not'.  
 When Moses goes to a Pharaoh,  
 His heart gets strength from the words 'Do not fear'.  
 Fear of anybody except God is inimical to action;  
 It is a robber in the caravan of life.  
 He who has grasped the secret of Muṣṭafā  
 Sees infidelity concealed in fear.

These are stirring lines to help one overcome fear and anxiety in dark days.

(ii) *Beggary*. The term used by Iqbal is *su'āl*, and the corresponding term in the English language is 'beggary' or 'asking'.

<sup>1</sup> Halidé Edib: *Inside India*, p. 107.

But Iqbal does not use this term in the restricted sense in which it is generally used to denote begging for anything. According to him all that is achieved without personal effort is included in *su'āl*. The son of a rich man who inherits his father's wealth is a beggar, so is the person who borrows his ideas from others. And *su'āl* in every form is inimical to development of the ego.

از سوال افلاس گردد و خوار تر از گدائی گدیه گرنا دار تر  
از سوال آشفته اجزائے خودی بے تجلی نخل سینائے خودی

By asking, poverty is made more abject,  
By begging, the beggar is made poorer.  
Asking disintegrates the Self,  
And deprives of illumination the Sinai-bush  
of the Self.

Asking for even slight favours comes under *su'āl* and must be religiously eschewed. For example, when Ḥaḍrat 'Omar dropped his whip he came down from his camel to pick it up. He did not like the idea of being under obligation to anyone by asking him to hand up the whip.

خود فرود آ از شتر مثل عمر الحذر از منت غیر الحذر

Like 'Omar, come down from thy camel;  
Beware of incurring obligations, beware!

All exploiters of other persons are beggars according to Iqbal, even though they may be rolling in luxury; for their egos lack the invigorating touch of personal effort. Kings who live on their subjects and do not work are equally beggars. Whether one asks for tribute or charity one is a 'beggar' just the same. All parasites flourishing on society under various high-sounding names are also beggars. Imagine, what development of human character, what unfolding of the inner richness of human nature and what addition to human thought would result if we all avoided *su'āl*!

(iii) *Slavery*. Of all the institutions ever designed by the ingenuity of man for the exploitation of his fellow beings, none is more degrading than slavery. Slavery distorts character, degrades human nature and lowers man to the level of a beast. Naturally enough it tends to weaken the human ego. It must be eradicated

if the human ego is to develop properly. Real men can only be brought up in a spirit of freedom.

از غلامی دل بمیرد و در بدن از غلامی روح گردد بارتین  
از غلامی بزم ملت فرد فرد این و آن باین و آن اندر زبرد

In slavery the heart is killed in the body,  
In slavery the soul becomes a burden to the body,  
In slavery the community is disunited,  
This one and that one quarrel with that one and this one.

While actual slavery is now abolished over a large portion of the globe, slavery in the form of political and economic exploitation still persists. Under such conditions the atmosphere is so depressing that it stifles the growth of the ego, for it needs freedom for its normal growth. Hence all political subjugation and economic serfdom should be banned if mankind is to attain moral and spiritual stature.

(iv) *Nasab-parastī*. *Nasab-parastī* means the pride in one's stock or extraction. This must be discouraged as it tends to create barriers between man and man, based on considerations other than their intrinsic worth. Races, nations, tribes, communities, castes and families all claim for themselves peculiar excellence, and on these base their superiority. Originally when political powers were centred in certain families, people took pride in their families. In recent times the wars and Bolshevism have tended to disregard pride of family, but statecraft has tried to encourage pride of 'race'. The result is, as Huxley and Haddon have remarked: 'There is not one but a multitude of "chosen peoples"'. Allowing for differences of atmosphere and language, some of the noblest claims made of the British, by Mr Kipling for instance, are closely similar to the claims made for the tribes of Israel by the authors of certain biblical books.<sup>1</sup>

While family is an ancient biological factor, the 'nation-state' is a modern conception, and race has now superseded both former conceptions. An elaborate and specious pseudo-science of racial biology has been created merely to justify class prejudices and political ambitions. But pride in either family, nation or race is

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Huxley and A. C. Haddon; *We Europeans*, p. 17.

equally meaningless and prejudicial to human growth. It is not a healthy feeling, and must be discouraged. It is bound to retard the development of an ego.

برنسب نازان شدن نادانی است حکم او اندر تن و تن فانی است  
ملت ما را اساس دیگر است این اساس اندر دل ماضی است

To be proud of ancestry is a mistake,  
Ancestry relates to body and body is  
ephemeral.

Our community has a different basis,  
The secret of which is in our hearts.

It will be noticed that many of the factors mentioned represent the positive and negative of the same picture. For example, if a man acts with courage he is discarding fear, while a man who lives on *kasb-i-halāl* naturally avoids *su'āl*. It is very difficult to keep the <sup>kind</sup> benign and <sup>\*supervising</sup> malign forces influencing the development of the ego in water-tight compartments. All these forces act and react and tend to mix together along the boundary. But all the factors exercising any influence on the development of the ego have been detailed separately for the sake of elucidation and right emphasis.

By encouraging influences which fortify it, and by avoiding those which lead to its weakening, the ego grows from strength to strength. In this evolutionary process it has to pass through three stages:

- (a) Obedience to the Law.
- (b) Self-control, which is the highest form of self-consciousness or ego-hood.
- (c) Divine vicegerency.

Obedience to the Law and Self-control also play a great part in the fortification of the ego, but Iqbal prefers to regard them as representing milestones on the upward march towards the goal—Superman. To an ego that is properly disciplined and suitably fortified, the first stage is represented by a phase where obedience to the Law comes unconsciously. The ego has no conflicts to face so far as the Law is concerned. On the other hand obedience to the Law, along with other benign forces, tends to school the ego for

the second evolutionary phase where it attains perfect self-control. Self-control in its turn prepares the ego for the final stage—Divine vicegerency. As regards the third and final stage it is impossible to improve upon Iqbal's own description:

The *nā'ib* (vicegerent) is the vicegerent of God on earth. He is the completest Ego, the goal of humanity, the <sup>perfection</sup> acme of life both in mind and body; in him the discord of our mental life becomes a harmony. The highest power is united in him with the highest knowledge. In his life, thought and action, instinct and reason, become one. He is the last fruit of the tree of humanity, and all the trials of a painful evolution are justified because he is to come at the end. He is the real ruler of mankind; his kingdom is the kingdom of God on earth. S

اے سوارِ اشب دورانِ بیا  
اے فردِ غدیہ امکانِ بیا  
شورشِ اقوام را خاموش کن  
نغمہ خود را بہشتِ گوش کن  
خیز و قانونِ اخوت ساز ده  
جامِ صباے محبت باز ده  
باز در عالمِ یسارِ ایام صلح  
جنگجویان را بدہ پیغام صلح  
نوع انسان مزرع و تو حاصلی  
کاروانِ زندگی را منزلی

Appear, O rider of Destiny!  
Appear, O light of the dark realm of  
Changel  
Silence the noise of the nations;  
Imparadise our ears with thy music!



Arise and tune the harp of brotherhood;  
 Give us back the cup of the wine of love!  
 Bring once more days of peace to the world;  
 Give a message of peace to them that seek battle!  
 Mankind is the cornfield and thou the harvest;  
 Thou art the goal of Life's caravan.

Whilst rules for the development of an individual are laid down above, the ego can develop fully only in association with other egos and not in isolation. The Perfect Man has to work in co-operation with others to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth, and he cannot exist independently of the group to which he belongs. As a matter of fact this adjustment of personal activity to social good is primarily beneficial to the Perfect Man himself, because he cannot achieve his highest possibilities except by identifying himself with social purpose. This means that the ego has to live and work in a society. Referring to the influence of society on individuals McDougall has remarked: 'It would seem probable that apart from the influence of society in moulding the characters of its members, the behaviour of all men would be as rude, as ruthlessly self-seeking, as unrestrained by any moral considerations as the behaviour of most other mammals.'<sup>1</sup> We have to decide what kind of society is needed for the free development of the ego and what kind of society provides greatest scope for it when developed.

Before determining the nature of such an ideal society we have to decide the optimum relations between society and the individual. There are individualists who regard the development of the individual as the supreme end of life's process, and the State as merely an instrument of his development. On the other hand there are Hegelians who regard the State as a supra-personal entity whose strength and integrity are far more important than the rights of the individual. Between these two extremes Iqbal takes a balanced view and maintains that the growth of a full and free personality is impossible unless it draws its spiritual sustenance from the culture of the group to which it belongs. On the other hand, the group in its own interests owes a duty to the individual and so should interfere with his development as little as possible, and then only when the common good demands it. In short, the quality of the life of a community is simply the

<sup>1</sup> William McDougall: *Energies of Men*, p. 112.



quality of the life of the individual writ large, and unless the individual quality is sound and disciplined the community is bound to be in confusion. As Kipling says:

Now this is the law of the jungle—as old and as true as the sky,  
And the wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the wolf that shall  
break it must die.  
As the creeper that girds the tree-trunk the Law runneth forward  
and back,  
Yet the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the  
wolf is the pack.

Iqbal has put it better; he says:

فرد را ربط جماعت رحمت است جوهر او را کمال از ملت است  
فرد تا اندر جماعت گم شود قطره وسعت طلب قلم شود  
فرد تنها از مقاصد غافل است قوتش آشنفتگی را مایل است

To an individual, attachment to a group is blessing;  
His potential worth attains perfection from the group,  
When an individual identifies himself with a group,  
The drop in its quest for expansion becomes an ocean.  
The lone individual is unaware of objectives;  
His strength is prone to disintegration.

For such an ideal society Iqbal has laid down eight essential requirements:

(i) It must be based on spiritual considerations such as monotheism.

(ii) It must centre round inspired leadership or prophet-hood.

(iii) It must possess a code for its guidance.

(iv) It needs a centre.

(v) It must have a clear goal towards which the whole community should strive.

(vi) It must gain supremacy over the forces of nature.

(vii) The communal or collective ego must be developed in the same way as the individual ego is developed.

(viii) It must safeguard maternity.

Now we shall deal with these requirements in detail.

(i) *Monotheism*. Any society which fails to recognise the fundamental brotherhood of mankind is doomed to failure. Basing any human society on considerations of race, colour, creed or geography is like putting up an imposing building with insecure foundations. If society is to be founded on a secure basis that basis must be spiritual—too deep-rooted to be affected by any adverse influences. This spiritual basis is provided by the principle of monotheism, which gives a foundation for world unity by admitting the basic principle that all mankind represents one brotherhood. The principle of monotheism, viewed psychologically, seeks to restore to a torn and divided world its integral unity. It provides for all members of the society unity of thought and unity of action. Hence all great religions have insisted on this doctrine. 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. . . . Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God. . . .' (Exod. xx, 3-5). The Qur'ān says:

God forgiveth not  
That equals should be set up  
With Him; but He forgiveth  
Anything else, to whom  
He pleaseth; to set up equals with God  
Is to devise a sin  
Most heinous indeed. IV: 48

The importance of monotheism, as a cement for the warring and disintegrating elements of humanity, is described by Iqbal in the following lines with special reference to Islamic society:

The new culture finds the foundation of world unity in the principle of '*Tawhīd*'. Islam as a polity is only a practical means of making this principle a living factor in the intellectual and emotional life of mankind. It demands loyalty to God, not to thrones. And since God is the ultimate spiritual basis of all life, loyalty to God virtually amounts to man's loyalty to his own ideal nature.<sup>1</sup>

The belief in one God provides an effective antidote to all those reactionary forces which exploit hatred and provoke antagonism. It provides a psychological basis for society by restoring the essential unity of mankind, and by insisting that all mankind

<sup>1</sup> *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 140.

represents one brotherhood bound together by a spiritual connection. It is only such ideas that can act as a unifying force, and break down the division of mankind into warring tribes and antagonistic camps.

آن که در صد سینه پیچید یک نفس  
 سرّی از اسرار توحید است و بس  
 دین از حکمت ازو آئین ازو  
 زور ازو قوت ازو تمکین ازو  
 قوت او برگزیند بنده را  
 نوع دیگر آفریند بنده را  
 بیم و شک میرد عمل گیرد حیات  
 چشم می بیند ضمیر کائنات

That which leads to unison in a hundred individuals  
 Is but a secret from the secrets of *Tawhīd*.  
 Religion, wisdom and law are all its effects;  
 Power, strength and supremacy originate from it.  
 Its influence exalts the slaves,  
 And virtually creates a new species out of them.  
 Within it fear and doubt depart, spirit of action revives,  
 And the eye sees the very secret of the Universe!

(ii) *Prophethood*. The part played by prophets in the evolution of humanity cannot be overestimated, and the devotion that men have displayed towards great prophets gives us a measure of mankind's recognition of the debt it owes to those inspired leaders. Loyalty to the prophets has always been a source of strength to their people; and for the Muslims the great and remarkable personality of the Prophet provides a focus where all loyalties converge and all disrupting tendencies disappear. [Thus faith in prophethood or inspired leadership provides the second important corner-stone for the structure of the ideal society.]

اے ظہور تو شباب زندگی جلوہ ات تعمیر خواب زندگی  
 اے زمین از بارگاہت ارجمند آسمان از بوسہ بامت بلند  
 شجست روشن ز تاب روئے تو ترک و تاجیک و عرب ہندوئے تو  
 در جہان شمع حیات افروختی بندگان را خواجگی آموختی

Hail! Thy advent restores to life its prime!  
 Thy appearance provides interpretation to the dream  
 of life.

The earth gains glory from thy mansion,  
 The sky rises in esteem by kissing thy roof.  
 The radiance from thy face lightens the Universe;  
 The Turk, the Tajik and the Arab all thy serfs.  
 Thou hast lighted the candle of life in the Universe.  
 Thou hast taught slaves the lore of masters.

از رسالت در جہان تکوین ما تہ رسالت دین ما آئین ما  
 از رسالت صد ہزار بایک است جزو ما از جزو مالا یخفک است  
 از رسالت ہم نوا گشتیم ما ہم نفس ہم مدعا گشتیم ما

On prophethood is based our existence on this earth,  
 From prophethood are derived our religion, our code.  
 The Prophet moulded hundreds of thousands of us into one,  
 So that various parts were inseparably welded into each other.  
 From prophethood we attained unity of tune;  
 It imparted to us the unity of breath and the unity of objective.

It will be seen that once a society is formed on the spiritual basis of monotheism and prophethood as distinct from a purely temporal basis, it ceases to be a function of space and time. It acquires a value which is not superseded by such limits, and becomes imperishable and eternal. It possesses a sustaining power which enables it to survive all attacks from within and without. In fact it has what the Hindu philosophers call the quality of *mirtyunjayatan* or deathlessness.

(iii) *A code.* A society must have a code of behaviour to guide it during periods of uncertainty and trouble. Amidst the fluctua-

tions of values which cause the truths and certainties of one generation to appear as superstitious and empty conventions in the eyes of a succeeding generation, a code imparts stability to life. In this world of shifting values, when a community, faced with the turmoils of life, begins to lose faith in itself and in its standard of values, a code serves as a beacon directing the community to safe waters. Without a proper code of behaviour communal life is sure to end in confusion. For the Muslims the code is provided by the 'Qur'ān.

✓ نوع انسان را پیام آخرین حامل او رحمت اللطیفین

For mankind it is the last message,  
Its bearer is a blessing for the worlds.

(iv) *A centre.* Every society needs a centre from which all its cultural and social activities will radiate. These activities provide the society with its life-blood, and the centre functions as a heart providing fresh and invigorating blood to the distant limbs. So long as the centre is there to provide this life-giving blood, the whole body will function properly and without dislocation. The British Commonwealth has its centre in London. To every Britisher a pilgrimage to Town is a great occasion and something to be sought after. For the Muslims this centre is provided by Mecca.

(v) *An objective.* To attain real solidarity every group or community must have a well-defined goal or objective towards the attainment of which all its activities must be guided. This ideal serves as a landmark to guide the community when, owing to decadence, there is disunity of purpose among the rank and file. For the Muslims this objective is the propagation of the doctrine of the unity of God or monotheism, and a nobler objective it is hard to think of! Others may have such mundane objectives as the conquest of land or the attainment of political power and supremacy, but these are not capable of stimulating the life of high endeavour and unselfishness which only a great spiritual objective is capable of doing.

(vi) *Conquest over the forces of nature.* To fortify his personality every individual must acquire mastery over his environment, that

is to say, attain sway over the forces of nature by developing the study of science. This means the development of a scientific outlook in man, who thereby begins probing into the mysteries of Nature. While all this is necessary for an individual, for a community it is a matter of life and death. The West owes its supremacy to its development of physical resources and study of natural phenomena, and one of the main causes of Eastern decadence is the neglect of science which has led to political and economic disintegration. The history of the Arabs shows the dire consequences resulting from a neglect of science by any people. During the hey-day of their progress, the Arabs led the people of the world in the study and cultivation of science. Biffault says: 'Science is the most momentous contribution of Arab civilisation to the modern world. Nowhere is this (*i.e.*, the decisive influence of Islamic culture) so clear and momentous as in the genesis of that power which constitutes the distinctive force of the modern world and the supreme source of its victory—natural science and the scientific spirit.' But when the Arabs began neglecting the sciences, they soon lost the prominent position they had attained in the world. Referring to this pernicious influence, Dr Sachau has remarked: 'Were it not for al-Ash'ari and al-Ghazālī the Arabs would have been a nation of Galileos and Newtons.' The result of their neglect of science was that they had to make room for the European nations.

(vii) *Development of the communal ego.* In order to attain stability and prosperity the society must develop its collective ego just like an individual, and this is rendered possible by keeping up traditions. To see the important part played by traditions in the life of a group, one has only to look at the history of the Jews. This small community has been harassed in all countries for centuries, and at times the prospects of its survival have looked very slender indeed; still the Jews have weathered all oppression successfully. Disraeli speaks thus of his people: 'Expatriation, exile, captivity, confiscation, torture of the most ingenious type and massacres on the most extensive scale, a curious system of degrading customs and debasing laws which would have broken the heart of any other people, have been tried in vain.' Why have all these attempts to extirpate this small community, with no resources except its own ingenuity, failed? Because through all their trials and tribulations the Jews have remained faithful to their



past traditions. During periods of prosperity every community creates certain healthy traditions, and in days of adversity the community can do no better than to stick to these traditions till there is a turn in the tide.

(viii) *Maternity*. To understand the importance of maternity one has only to look at the increasing flood of literature published in every country during recent times advocating bigger families. According to Iqbal, gold and silver do not constitute any people's wealth; the real wealth of a community is in its sons, active, virile, hardworking and quick in mental grasp. Arthur Bryant says in *The English Saga*: 'England is now learning again that neither wealth nor power nor comfort, whether for class or individual, are ends in themselves: that the wealth of a nation consists in nothing but the virtue of her children and children's children.' If this is so not only does maternity need protection and encouragement but it must be honoured. Every country in the world is doing that to-day. The substantial prizes offered to persons with the largest families and the honour given to women with the largest number of children proves that the modern world has come to realise the importance of maternity which Iqbal preached a quarter of a century ago. This is all the more remarkable when one recollects that until recently European nations were still insisting on birth-control, and the change in their attitude towards maternity has been brought about only recently. By discouraging maternity some European nations have been led to the commission of political suicide, and others have been guilty of grave disservice to their culture and history. They have thereby denied themselves the important role they were, by their past achievements, entitled to play in the affairs of the world. Helen Jackson has expressed the importance of maternity in the following beautiful and inspiring words:

A woman who creates and sustains a home, and under whose hands children grow up to be strong and pure men and women, is a creator second only to God.

It will be seen from what has been written above that Iqbal in his philosophy of the ego has not only provided a complete scheme for the development of individuals but has also prescribed the essentials of society, which on the one hand will help the development of the individual and, on the other, provide the



best scope for the creative unfolding of man's individuality. He goes further and lays down rules that will help a society, which through its negligence or misdeeds falls on evil days, to tide over the period of decadence. But there still remains an important question affecting man: the question of the nature of the universe in which man has to live. We have seen that according to Iqbal, the life of the ego consists in the mutual contention of the ego and the environment—the ego invading the environment and the environment counter-invading the ego. Thus the existence of the external world or environment is involved in the life of the ego, and it is obvious that the external world exists and is real; but the question arises as to what is the exact nature of the external world. Iqbal tries to determine the nature of the external world by having recourse to analogy. On the analogy of the self, it may be maintained that the physical world too exists in time, but time is the peculiar possession of a self only. The world must accordingly be regarded as a unique self. If the nature of the universe is that of the self, it follows that it is life and is in a state of constant flux and change. In the history of the universe there is constant activity, action and movement, and like all life the universe is free, creative and essentially original. The universe, therefore, is a constantly growing universe which is bursting and burgeoning at every instant. It is a constantly progressing, self-generating and self-evolving universe whose inner possibilities of growth and evolution will never know any limits. In short the world is a free dynamic process and not a static existence. It is not subject to any external compulsive law, for in that case it would not be creative at all.

Having determined the nature of the universe, there remains the fundamental problem which has vexed philosophers and thinkers of all ages and times: the nature of God—the Ultimate Ego. Iqbal regards the Ultimate Ego as of the nature of the self. But the Ultimate Ego does not lie apart from the universe as if separated by a space lying between Him and ourselves. This leads us to the conclusion that the Ultimate Self is not transcendent as conceived by anthropomorphic theists. He is immanent, as He holds the finite egos in His own Self without obliterating their existence. Iqbal answers the question as to how the Infinite and the finite egos can mutually exclude each other in the following words:

Can the finite ego, as such, retain its finitude besides the Infinite Ego? This difficulty is based on a misunderstanding of the true nature of the infinite. True infinity does not mean infinite extension which cannot be conceived without embracing all available finite extensions. Its nature consists in intensity and not extensity; and the moment we fix our gaze on intensity, we begin to see that the finite ego must be distinct, though not isolated, from the Infinite. Extensively regarded I am absorbed by the spatio-temporal order as a confronting 'other' wholly alien to me. I am distinct from and yet intimately related to that on which I depend for my life and sustenance.<sup>1</sup>

On the analogy of the self, the Ultimate Reality has an ego-hood, that is to say He has consciousness of His own 'I-am-ness' like us, but His 'I-am-ness' does not lie within the grasp of our experience. Thus the Ultimate Ego is transcendent also. In short the Ultimate Reality is transcendent as well as immanent, and yet neither one nor the other. But an emphasis on immanence would lead to a dissolution of the human ego in the Infinite, and this would be like giving up the reality of the self which is the corner-stone of Iqbal's thought and philosophy. Hence Iqbal emphasises the transcendence of the Ultimate Ego rather than His immanence. Insistence on transcendence serves two purposes: on the one hand it emphasises the existence of the finite ego and on the other it brings to light the individuality and ego-hood of the Infinite.

By regarding the Universe as the ego, Iqbal parts company with the pantheists; and the fact that he holds the Ultimate Ego to be a Personality with attributes of creativeness, omniscience and eternity make him a theist. But as Iqbal's God comprehends the whole universe and in Him alone the finite egos find their being, his conception of the Ultimate Ego differs from that of the old theists. A personal God is not necessarily opposed to the being and freedom of finite egos. In short the position of Iqbal as regards God is personalistic, theistic and pluralistic.

We have given above in brief outline the gist of Iqbal's philosophy of the ego, but if philosophy 'is the unseen foundation on which the structure of a civilisation rests',<sup>2</sup> there is no phase of

<sup>1</sup> *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Sir S. Radhakrishnan: *Kalki or the Future of Civilisation*.

human activity in which Iqbal does not provide us with guidance. But it is not possible for us to deal here with Iqbal's philosophy in general. That would need volumes. Still enough has been said to show that Iqbal's philosophy, preaching the gospel of self-reverence, brings a message of hope and cheer to humanity distracted and trammelled by its own greed and passion for aggrandisement. On the one hand this philosophy preaches self-affirmation by individuals; on the other it prescribes suppression of perverse individualism which precludes any collective and concerted action. Iqbal prescribes the basis for human society 'on such spiritual considerations that even the deep cleavage of colour and race ceases to count. Iqbal is not content merely with turning kings into philosophers and philosophers into kings like Plato, he aims at turning every man into a *Faqir*, and his *Faqir* is something much more than Plato's Philosopher and King combined.

What more stirring words can be imagined than the following lines which describe man's great mission on this planet:

یہ عالم یہ ہنگامہ رنگ و صوت    یہ عالم کہ ہے زیر فرمان موت  
یہ عالم یہ بت خانہ چشم و گوش    جہاں زندگی ہے فقط خورد و نوش  
خودی کی یہ ہے منزل اولیں    مسافر یہ تیرا نشیمن نہیں  
بڑھے جا یہ کوہ گراں توڑ کر    طلسم زمان و مکاں توڑ کر  
جہاں اور بھی ہیں ابھی بے نمود    کہ خالی نہیں ہے ضمیر و جود  
ہر اک منتظر تیری یلغار کا    تیری شوخی فکر و کردار کا  
یہ ہے مقصد گردش روزگار    کہ تیری خودی تجھ پہ ہو آشکار

This world, this riot of colour and sound;  
This universe which is subject to the rule of death;  
This world which is only a temple created by eyes and ears,  
Wherein life consists of naught but eating and drinking—  
This is the first halting stage for the ego.  
O traveller, this is not meant to be thy abode!  
Advance on after breaking this great barrier,  
Solving the mysteries of Time and Space.

There are other worlds unseen,  
 And the essence of existence is not yet void;  
 Every one of them waiting for thy conquest,  
 For the unbridled play of thy thought and action.  
 The object of the passage of time is but one:  
 To reveal to thee the possibilities of thy ego!

- Before concluding, a reference must be made to a growing fashion amongst a section of writers to belittle Iqbal's contribution to human thought by saying that his message is meant only for the Muslims. That there is no grain of truth in this accusation will be apparent from what has been written above. A thinker who considers tolerance as an important ingredient in the make-up of his supermen can never confine his message to a section only. The truth is that Iqbal has propounded a philosophy for man's everyday conduct which teaches him, amongst other things, the art of living together. So far as laying down a theoretical scheme is concerned, it can be done in abstract terms; but when he wants to offer illustrations he has to turn back upon one of the existing social and religious systems. That no serious student of sociology can afford to ignore Islam as a system will be clear from the following remarks by a Christian missionary:

The religion of Mahomet proclaimed the first real democracy ever conceived in the mind of man. His God was of such transcendent greatness that before Him all worldly differences were naught and even the deep and cruel cleavages of colour ceased to exist. There are social ranks among Muslims as elsewhere, but fundamentally (that is to say, spiritually) all believers are equal: and this fundamental spiritual equality is not a fiction as is the case among Christians; it is accepted and is real. This accounts very largely for its extraordinarily rapid spread among different peoples. It accounts for its strength today in Africa where the Christian missionary preaches an equality which is everywhere marked by the arrogance of the white races and the existence of the colour bar. The Muslim, black, brown, or white alone finds himself accepted as a brother not according to his colour but his creed.<sup>1</sup>

It would not be correct to say that Milton's writings are meant to be enjoyed only by Christians because his conception of life

<sup>1</sup> Dr Maude Royden: *The Problem of Palestine*, p. 37. Published by Hutchinson and Co., Ltd.

is essentially Christian, and because his illustrations are all drawn from the Bible. None can underrate the universal appeal of *Shākuntala* because the characters in it think and act essentially as Hindus. Iqbal once wrote to a European scholar: 'The object of my Persian poems is not to plead for Islam. Really I am keenly interested in the search for a better social order; and in this search it is simply impossible to ignore an actually existing social system the main object of which is to abolish all distinctions of race, caste and colour.' Perhaps it is unnecessary to emphasise that no thinker absorbed in evolving a system for the regeneration of humanity could ignore an existing system which has served to abolish all artificial barriers between man and man, has always espoused the cause of the down-trodden by removing all disabilities, social, economic and political, and has given to humanity a message of freedom, social equality and human brotherhood. That Iqbal always had non-Muslims too in mind when preaching his message will be evident from the following lines:

من نه گویم از بتان بیزارشو    کافری شائسته ز نارشو  
ای امانت دار تهذیب کهن    پشت پا بر مسلک آبا مرزن  
گزر جمعیت حیات ملت است    کفر هم سرمایہ جمعیت است  
تو که هم در کافری کامل نه    در خور طوف حریم دل نه  
مانده ایم از جادۀ تسلیم دور    تو ز آذر من ز ابراهیم دور

I do not bid thee abandon thine idols.  
Art thou an unbeliever? Then be worthy of the  
    badge of unbelief!  
O inheritor of ancient culture,  
Turn not thy back on the path thy fathers trod!  
If a people's life is derived from unity,  
Unbelief too is a source of unity.  
Thou, that art not even a perfect infidel,  
Art unfit to worship at the shrine of the spirit.  
We both are far astray from the road of devotion:  
Thou art far from Azar, and I from Abraham.

### 3

## *Iqbal and Eastern Thought*

نکردم از کسی در یوزۀ چشم جهان را جز به چشم خود ندیدم

I never begged anyone for eyes to see with,  
I have not looked at the Universe except  
through my own eyes.

WE HAVE SEEN that the basis of Iqbal's philosophy is the human ego. Iqbal is struck by the fact that there is individuality in everything that lives or exists; the stars of heaven and the things of earth are all, according to Iqbal, individuals and do not merge in each other, but they do not possess individuality in an equal degree. Individuality is an upward movement through which all living objects and things pass. It marches up the ascending scale of life until it reaches man and in him it becomes personality. Fortification of personality enables the ego to conquer environment and space on the one hand and time on the other, and to approach the greatest Ego of all egos—God in His attributes—and thus produce Superman. Thus Iqbal starts with a strong faith in the evolution of man in three directions: attainment of personal freedom, attainment of personal immortality and production of perfect man. And as the human ego can develop only in association with other egos and not in isolation, Iqbal's philosophy lays down the essentials of the society most conducive to the development of the ego. As Iqbal's philosophy deals with matters concerning the very destiny of mankind, other thinkers in East and West have also given their thoughts to the various problems considered in Iqbal's philosophy. To trace the affinities of Iqbal's thought with that of other great thinkers would be tantamount to tracing the history of human thought from the earliest times to the present day, and cannot be attempted here. All that can be attempted is to trace briefly the affinity between the main trends



of Iqbal's philosophy of the ego and the teachings of other prominent figures in the history of human thought. These affinities sometimes show us the sources of Iqbal's thought, but tracing the sources of a great thinker's philosophy is in itself an extremely hazardous task; and we would be well-advised not to rush to any hasty conclusions. Sir Thomas Arnold remarks: 'Sir Muḥammad Iqbal, in spite of his learning and his wide reading, is no mere echo of other men's ideas but is distinctly an original thinker.'<sup>1</sup>

The sources which exhibit certain points of affinity with Iqbal's thought can be grouped as below:

A. *Eastern:*

(1) Islamic sources

(a) The Qur'ān and the Prophet's Traditions.

(b) Mystic writers:

(i) Theists such as Maulānā Rūmī and al-Ghazālī.

(ii) Pantheists such as Ibnul 'Arabī and al-Jīlī.

(c) Scholastic theologians.

(2) Non-Islamic sources:

B. *Western:*

(1) Greek philosophers.

(2) German idealists such as Kant and Fichte.

(3) Modern European philosophers such as Nietzsche and Bergson.

We shall deal first with the Eastern sources. But before proceeding further, it may be mentioned that while we are here concerned mainly with tracing affinities, as a rule Iqbal with his dynamic philosophy differs from Eastern thinkers more often than he agrees with them.

Iqbal has left copious notes in his writings to enable us to trace the connection between his philosophy and the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān recognises individuality by the simple fact of refusing to admit the doctrine of redemption. The Qur'ān lays down in unmistakable terms that it is impossible for one individual to bear the burden of another:

<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Arnold: *Islamic Faith*, p. 77. Ernest Benn Ltd., London.

Every soul draws the meed  
Of its acts on none  
But itself: no bearer  
Of burdens can bear  
The burden of another.

VI: 164

Further, every individual is entitled only to what is due to his own personal effort:

Then guard yourself against a Day,  
When one soul shall not avail another,  
Nor shall compensation be accepted from her  
Nor shall intercession profit her,  
Nor shall any one be helped from outside.

II: 123

Affirmation of individuality could not have been more emphatically stated:

We did indeed offer  
The Trust to the Heavens  
And the Earth  
And the Mountains;  
But they refused to undertake it,  
Being afraid thereof:  
But man undertook it;  
He was indeed unjust  
And foolish.

XXXIII: 72

As regards the attainment of freedom by the human ego, the Qur'ān recognises that the ego is a free personal causality. The Ultimate Ego, by permitting the emergence of an ego with the capacity for initiative, has to a certain extent restricted His own freedom:

Say, 'The Truth is  
From Your Lord.'  
Let him who will,  
Believe, and let him  
Who will, reject it.

XVIII: 29

Indeed the laying down of regular daily prayers is also meant as a means of the ego's escape from mechanicalness to freedom. By understanding and mastering its environment, the ego acquires

and amplifies its freedom. The whole Universe is meant to be subjugated by man who thereby attains freedom:

Do ye not see  
That God has subjected  
To your use all things  
In the heavens and on earth,  
And has made His bounties  
Flow to you in exceeding  
Measure, both seen and unseen?

XXXI: 20

The vital way of approaching the Universe is what the Qur'ān describes as '*Imān*'.

According to the Qur'ān, it is open to man to attain immortality under certain circumstances, but man has to work for it:

By the Soul,  
And the proportion and order  
Given to it;  
And its enlightenment  
And to its wrong  
And its right;  
Truly he succeeds  
That purifies it,  
And he fails  
That corrupts it.

XCI: 7-10

And what is the best way of making the soul grow and of saving it from corruption: the way of action.

Blessed be He  
In Whose hands  
Is Dominion;  
And He over all things  
Hath Power;—  
He Who created Death  
And Life, that He  
May try which of you  
Is best in deed:  
And He is the Exalted  
In Might, Oft-forgiving.

LXVII: 1-2

As we have seen, according to Iqbal, life offers scope for ego-activity and death provides the first test of the synthetic activity of the ego. It is action alone that either prepares the ego for disso-

lution or disciplines him for a future career. Personal immortality can thus be achieved by personal effort, but we have to work for it.

As regards the Perfect Man or Superman, the idea is suffused throughout the Qur'ān. The following verses clearly refer to the Supermen:

Ye are the best  
Of Peoples, evolved  
For mankind,  
Enjoining what is right,  
Forbidding what is wrong,  
And believing in God.

III: 110

The following verses refer to the possibility of God producing Supermen:

That We can certainly  
Substitute for them  
Better men than they.

LXX: 40-41

It is not possible to give a detailed definition of the Superman in the Qur'ānic language without giving long and numerous extracts, but the main attributes of the Superman are summarised beautifully in the following lines:

Soon will God produce  
A people whom He will love  
As they will love Him,—  
Lowly with the Believers,  
Mighty against the Rejectors,  
Fighting in the Way of God.  
And never afraid  
Of the reproaches  
Of such as find fault.

V: 57

No detailed discussion is needed here to show how closely the Perfect Man as envisaged in the above lines resembles Iqbal's Superman.

There is one more parallelism between the Qur'ānic philosophy and Iqbal's thought which should be mentioned here. Iqbal describes the three stages for the development of the ego as:

1. Obedience to the Law.
2. Self-control.
3. Divine Vicegerency.

Obedience to law and self-control are extolled in the Qur'ān in several places. As regards the vicegerency of God, it is clear from the Qur'ān that man, with all his faults, is meant to be the representative of God on earth:

Behold, thy Lord said to the angels:  
 'I will create  
 A vicegerent on earth.' They said:  
 'Wilt Thou place therein one who  
 will make  
 Mischief therein and shed blood?—  
 Whilst we do celebrate Thy praises  
 And glorify Thy holy (name)?'  
 He said: 'I know what ye know not.'  
 II: 30

Further on the Qur'ān says:

It is He Who hath made  
 You His agents, inheritors  
 Of the earth: He hath raised  
 You in rank, some above  
 Others: that He may try you:  
 In the gifts He hath given you.  
 VI: 165

According to Iqbal the human ego can develop only in association with other egos and not in isolation. The ego must adjust its social activities to the common good of society, and must not limit its vision to any form of personal profit at the expense of the common good. The adjustment of personal activity to social good is also beneficial to the ego itself because thus only can it achieve its highest possibilities. This in itself is exactly in accordance with Qur'ānic teachings. The Qur'ān lays down:

And hold fast,  
 All together, by the Rope  
 Which God (stretches out  
 For you), and be not divided  
 Among yourselves.

III: 103

Moreover the society prescribed by Iqbal as the best suited to achieve the development of the ego follows the lines laid down for human societies in the Qur'ān. To trace in details the affinity between the Qur'ānic teaching and Iqbal's philosophy would need more space, but enough has been said above to indicate that in essentials the germs of Iqbal's philosophy are found in the Qur'ān.

As regards the Prophet's sayings we have the well-known saying:

He who knows his self, knows his God.

This saying concentrates one's thought on one's self or the ego, which is the basis of Iqbal's philosophy. As regards the development of the ego the Prophet has prescribed for this

تَخَلَّقُوا بِأَخْلَاقِ اللَّهِ

Create in yourselves the Divine attributes.

He who comes nearest to God is the most complete person, according to Iqbal. Similarly the Prophet's whole life was spent in action, which is the kernel of Iqbal's philosophy. Whenever Iqbal extols hardness it is supposed that he is borrowing ideas from modern European philosophers, but he has himself said:

از بلا ترسی؟ حدیث مصطفیٰ است  
مرد را روز بلا روز صفاست

Thou art afraid of trouble? The Prophet hath said:  
'To a man the day of trouble is but the day of purification.'

When describing the Muslim conception of Time, Iqbal always used to refer to the Prophet's saying: 'Don't vilify Time.'

Of all the Muslim mystics Iqbal shows most points of correspondence with the great mystic poet, Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī, popularly known as Maulānā Rūmī. The great poem of Maulānā Rūmī is the *Mathnawī*, which is held in such high esteem that it is known as the Qur'ān in the Persian language. Maulānā Rūmī was born at Balkh on 30 September 1207, where his father Bahā'-ud-Dīn was held in great esteem by the King Muḥammad Khwārizm Shāh. But Khwārizm Shāh had as his minister the famous Muslim philosopher, Imām Rāzī, who looked askance at Bahā'-ud-Dīn's unorthodox methods. Probably due to loss of favour with the King, Bahā'-ud-Dīn left Balkh in 1212. But he found the attraction of his birthplace too great to resist, and so later returned to Balkh. But he did not stay there very long, and in 1219, a year



before the Mongol invasion, he finally left Balkh. It is said that before leaving the place he delivered a speech in the local mosque, and foretold the doom of the town at the hands of the Mongol invaders.

After staying in Nishāpūr and Baghdād, Bahā'-ud-Dīn moved on to Quniya and died there. After his father's death Maulānā Rūmī went to Ḥalb for studies. Later on he settled down in Quniya and came under the influence of Shams-i-Tabrīz. His *magnum opus*, the *Mathnawī*, was undertaken at the request of his friend and disciple, Ḥisām-ud-Dīn Chalabī. Maulānā died on 17 December 1273, and was buried in Quniya.

Rūmī is to Iqbal what Virgil was to Dante. Both *Asrār-i-Khūdī* and *Rumūz-i-Bekhūdī* are composed in the metre and modelled on the style of Maulānā Rūmī's well-known *Mathnawī*. In the prologue to *Asrār-i-Khūdī*, Iqbal relates how Maulānā Rūmī appeared in a vision and bade him arise and sing. As a frontispiece to the combined edition of *Asrār* and *Rumūz* he put the following lines from the *Dīwān-i-Shams-i-Tabrīz*:

دی شیخ با چراغِ همی گشت گردشگر  
 کردام و دلدولم و انسانم آرزوست  
 زمین هرمان هست عناصر دلم گرفت  
 شیر خدا و رستم دستاخم آرزوست  
 گفتم که یافت می نشود جسته ایم ما  
 گفت آنکه یافت می نشود انم آرزوست

Yesterday the master with a lantern was roaming about the city,  
 Saying, 'I am tired of devil and beast. I desire a man!  
 My heart is weary of these weak-spirited companions.  
 I desire the Lion of God and Rustam son of Zal.'  
 They said, 'He is not to be found, we have sought Him long.'  
 He said, 'A thing that is not to be found—that is what I desire.'

In a poem in *Payām-i-Mashriq*, Iqbal gives us an interesting dialogue between Goethe and Rūmī in Heaven. According to

Iqbal, the theme of *Faust* and the *Mathnawī* is one and the same. In *Javīd-Nāmah*, Rūmī accompanies Iqbal to the various planets and to Heaven, and in his comments on all that he shows to Iqbal, Rūmī elucidates eternal truths. In *Bāl-i-Jibra'il*, Iqbal assumes the role of a disciple, calling himself *Murīd-i-Hindī*, and addresses Rūmī as a guide and philosopher and expresses feelings of esteem bordering on adoration. What is the cause of this great esteem in which Iqbal holds Rūmī? Rūmī has always been regarded as exercising a potent influence on Muslim thought; his *Mathnawī*, even if not properly understood, is read in every school and mosque throughout the Muslim world. There is a spiritual order known as the Maulviā which professes extreme loyalty to Rūmī. But there must be some special reason for a modern thinker like Iqbal showing all this admiration and adoration for him. We all admire that with which we agree. So we must assume that there are points of agreement between Rūmī and Iqbal and should try to find out what they are.

The study of Rūmī presents special difficulties owing to his manner of exposition. Nothing less than a thorough study of the six volumes of his *Mathnawī* will reveal to the student the ideas of this great mystic. Rūmī does not state his *Weltanschauung* in so many words, and so a student has to go through the voluminous *Mathnawī* to pick up his meaning. To illustrate how difficult it is to understand Rūmī one has only to point out the mistakes made by great scholars when interpreting him. Professor R. A. Nicholson of Cambridge, who was a student of Rūmī all his life, wrote in 1920 in his Introduction to *The Secrets of the Self*:

Much as he [Iqbal] dislikes the type of Šūfism exhibited by Hāfiz he pays homage to the pure and profound genius of Jalālud-Dīn, though he rejects the doctrine of self-abandonment taught by the great mystic and does not accompany him in his pantheistic flights.<sup>1</sup>

But in 1923 he wrote:

Neither the theologian nor the poet is a pantheist. From Ghazālī we get the sense and doctrine, from Jalālud-Dīn the sentiment, faith and experience of personal religion. I am aware that, as regards Jalālud-Dīn, this judgement may appear questionable to

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to *The Secrets of the Self*, p. xi.

those who have read certain passages in the *Dīwān-i-Shams-i-Tabrīz*, where he describes his oneness with God in terms which look pantheistic at first sight and which I myself understood in a pantheistic sense at a time when I knew less about the history of Sūfism than I do now.<sup>1</sup>

Maulānā Shiblī Nu'mānī, the great Oriental scholar, was a life-long student of Persian literature in general and of poetry in particular, and wrote an illuminating sketch on Rūmī. In this sketch he says that Rūmī believes in unityism and pantheism. Even these great Orientalists who devoted their lifetime to the study of Rūmī found it difficult to understand the true import of his thought. Iqbal was perhaps the first great writer of repute to interpret Rūmī correctly, which is proved by the fact that his interpretation has been upheld by other scholars.

Rūmī preaches a life of ceaseless activity and endless struggling to attain personal freedom and immortality. He goes even so far as to say:

کوشش بیسوده به از خفتگی

Useless striving is better than inaction.

Summing up Rūmī's views a scholar has remarked: 'So God is not an abstract and absolutely attributeless Being who sits behind the screen eternally unmoved. According to Rūmī "He is the most active Being and loves activity. Every day He is busy with something new. The sovereign ruling the Universe cannot sit idle. He loves movement; therefore, even a useless effort is better than utter passivity." What an utter refutation of quietism, generally considered to be inseparable from mysticism.' <sup>2</sup> Thus Iqbal and Rūmī agree in preaching a life of ceaseless activity and endeavour. Besides this there is great resemblance between their views on the following points amongst others:

- (1) Perfect or Ideal man.
- (2) Love.
- (3) Achievement of immortality.
- (4) Relationship between the finite ego and the Infinite Ego.

<sup>1</sup> R. A. Nicholson: *The Ideal of Personality in Sūfism*, p. 52. Cambridge University Press, 1923.

<sup>2</sup> Dr Khalifa Abdul Hakīm: *The Metaphysics of Rūmī*, p. 109. Shaikh Ashraf, Lahore, 1932.

Rūmī describes his Perfect or Ideal man as follows:

The Ideal man is one who has realised his transcendental or eternal self which is uncreated and divine.

It is possible for every individual to realise it, it is the end and goal of life.

The Ideal man is in immediate touch with God; neither prophets nor angels intervene between the two.

The Ideal man can work miracles which do not mean the annihilation of causation but only bringing into play causes that are not within the reach of common experience.

The Adam of the Qur'ān represents the Ideal man to whom the angels paid homage. The Ideal man does not represent only a possibility. In every age there is someone who has realised it.

Both Iqbal and Rūmī agree that it is open to us all to be Perfect men, who do not represent an aristocracy. According to both, the Perfect man can work miracles, and Iqbal even goes so far as to assert that the Perfect man is a miracle in himself. While Rūmī maintains that in every age there is an individual who is an Ideal man, Iqbal is silent on this, so apparently he felt that this was not necessarily so. While Rūmī is inclined to describe his Ideal man in the mystical language suitable to his time, Iqbal describes him in terms of matter and the universe, more in keeping with the knowledge of the physical world to-day. This is natural when we realise the different periods in which the two thinkers lived.

Love, according to Iqbal and Rūmī, is the greatest force in human life. It is indescribable in any language, and any attempt to describe it merely makes it more baffling. As mentioned already Iqbal uses the term 'Love' in a very wide sense, and the main feature of Love as understood by him is an intense desire on the part of a lover to assimilate the qualities and virtues of the beloved. Rūmī also emphasises the assimilating feature of Love. In fact this interpretation reinforces his hopes about the fortification of the ego. Love presents a paradox inasmuch as by giving we take and by dying we live. This is represented by inorganic matter ceasing to exist as such when it assumes organic life in a plant, which in its turn can become a part of animal life. So Rūmī argues that if by assimilation matter can progress to man, there can be no obstacle in the way of evolution of man to the Infinite Ego by his acquiring the qualities of God.

Concerning the achievement of immortality, Rūmī, like other Islamic mystics, has a strong belief in the survival of personality. He maintains that real immortality is association with God by getting rid of limited and conditioned individuality. The essence of the individual survives although his attributes may be merged in the divine attributes. The individual is only lost as the candle, or the stars are lost in the morning in the overwhelming effulgence of the light of the sun. To illustrate annihilation of the self by being clothed with divine attributes, Rūmī uses the analogy of red hot iron in fire. The iron takes the properties of fire without entirely losing its own individual essence. In that state it can claim to be fire as well as iron. Rūmī's conception of immortality follows from his conception of the transcendental self and from his idealistic premises. As man is afraid of death because he considers himself to be a part of a phenomenal nature, Rūmī wants to convince man that his real self, far from being a product of nature, is the source of all nature. In his transcendental aspect man is already immortal, and by development he can achieve personal immortality. There is complete agreement between Iqbal and Rūmī regarding this.

As regards the relationship of the finite ego to the Infinite Ego, Rūmī's God is not an absorbent unity, so 'living in Him and losing in Him' does not mean the merging of the drop in the ocean. Rūmī never talks of the annihilation of the human individuality. Here also there is perfect agreement between Iqbal and Rūmī.

We need not mention the other minor points on which these two great writers and thinkers agree. Enough has been said to show that so far as the fundamentals of his philosophy are concerned, Iqbal agrees with Rūmī, while both agree with the Qur'ān.

A passing reference has already been made to the fact that Iqbal developed his philosophy of the ego as a reaction to Ibnul 'Arabī's mystical philosophy of unityism, but here we are concerned with the points of affinity between their philosophies.

Shaikh Muḥyid-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn-'Alī, commonly known as Ibnul 'Arabī and Ash-Shaikh-ul-Akbar, was born at Murcia (South-East Spain) in 1164. At the age of eight he went to Lisbon for studies. Here he received his early Muslim education from Shaikh



Abū-Bakr. He then moved to Seville where he remained for thirty years studying Islamic Law, Tradition and Theology. While in residence in Seville, he travelled much and visited, among other places, Cordova and met Averroes there. At the age of thirty-eight he started for the East, finally reaching Damascus, where he died in 1240. While Ibnul 'Arabī will always be remembered mainly as a scholar, who through his personality and learning made neo-Platonic ideas popular in Islam, here we have to trace the few points of affinity between him and Iqbal. Ibnul 'Arabī developed a theory of the Logos. This theory comprises the following elements:

- (i) The Logos as the Reality of Realities: the metaphysical aspect.
- (ii) The Logos as the Reality of Muḥammad: the mystical aspect.
- (iii) The Logos as the Perfect Man: the human aspect.<sup>1</sup>

We are here only interested in Perfect Man, or Superman, to use a modern term, mainly to show that the subject has always engaged the attention of Muslim mystics, philosophers, writers and thinkers. According to Ibnul 'Arabī, the Perfect Man is an actual microcosm because he manifests all God's attributes and perfections, and such manifestation is incomplete without the full realisation of his essential unity with God. The Perfect Man is a miniature of reality. But the question naturally arises: in what does the perfection of the Perfect Man really consist? Is he perfect in knowledge or being or in both? Is the Perfect Man perfect because he is a perfect manifestation of God, or because in his mystical experience he realises his oneness with God? Ibnul 'Arabī confuses the two issues, although he evidently means both.

This doctrine of the Logos was developed subsequently by 'Abdul Karīm al-Jīlī, but before referring to this development we should draw attention to a point on which Ibnul 'Arabī and Iqbal agree. They both maintain that Heaven and Hell are states and not localities. According to Iqbal 'their descriptions in the Qur'ān are representations of an inner fact, *i.e.*, character.'<sup>2</sup> While the

<sup>1</sup> Those interested in the philosophy of Ibnul 'Arabī are referred to the excellent monograph *The Mystical Philosophy of Muḥyid-Dīn-Ibnul 'Arabī*, by Dr A. E. Affi, published by the Cambridge University Press, 1938.

<sup>2</sup> *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 116.



two actually differ in their definitions of Hell and Heaven, they agree that they do not represent any localities. According to Iqbal, Hell is not a pit of everlasting torture inflicted by a revengeful God, it is merely a corrective experience. Nor is Heaven a holiday. Man marches onward to receive ever fresh illuminations from an Infinite Reality. According to Ibnul 'Arabī there is no real difference between Heaven and Hell. The only difference is that the blessed, who are supposed to sojourn in Heaven, will behold the Beautiful Vision of the Epiphany and apprehend it on its first Vision, while the damned, who are supposed to sojourn in Hell, will not be able to recognise it until the veils are removed. Once the veils are removed even this difference will disappear.<sup>1</sup>

About a century and a half after Ibnul 'Arabī there flourished another mystical writer, 'Abdul Karīm al-Jīlī, who developed the doctrine of the Logos in a classical form in his theory of the *Insānūl Kāmil*. Al-Jīlī was born in 1366 and died in 1408. He was not a prolific writer, but like Iqbal he combined in himself poetical imagination and philosophical genius. We are here concerned mainly with his well-known work, *Insānūl Kāmil*. Al-Jīlī is a very discursive writer, and his treatise is full of digressions, hence it is not easy to grasp the fundamentals of his criteria for a Perfect Man. But luckily we have before us the result of patient studies by Iqbal and Nicholson. The following brief outline is mainly based on Iqbal's *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*. According to al-Jīlī, a name fixes the named in the understanding and creates a picture in the mind which lasts in the memory and can be vividly imagined. There is one Being which exists in two modes: the absolute, free from manifestation and the qualified, which is manifest. The absolute (*wujūd-mutlaq*) is devoid of all qualities and relations and exists enveloped in cecity. The first step in its manifestation is when it emerges from darkness without becoming externally manifest, and is a unity comprehending diversity. This stage can be best described as that of oneness. This is soon followed by the stage which can be described as that of He-ness (*Hunviya*). Here the Absolute Being is still free from all manifestation. The third stage I-ness is nothing but an external manifestation of the He-ness. Here the Absolute Being becomes conscious. The Divinity

<sup>1</sup> It is not proposed to discuss here whether these views are in agreement with the orthodox Muslim views or the Qur'ān. All that is intended is to state similarity between views held by Iqbal and Ibnul 'Arabī.

is the highest manifestation of the Absolute; it is actually a name for the sum of all the attributes. Al-Jīlī says further that the name Allah is the substance of all the perfection of the different phases of Divinity.

Man in perfection is the image of God. He is a mirror reflecting His names and attributes. He is the microcosm in which the absolute becomes conscious of itself in all its diverse parts. How is man to attain this perfection? By spiritual training and mystical ascent. As the Absolute descends by many stages into man, man by ascent returns to the Divine. The process of ascent or perfection has three stages. In the first stage man meditates on the names of God. In the second stage he steps into the sphere of the attributes, and here he begins to participate in the divine attributes and acquires miraculous powers. In the third stage he crosses the domain of names and attributes, and enters the sphere of the Essence-Absolute and becomes perfect God-man or '*Insān-i-Kāmil*'. His eye becomes the eye of God, his word the word of God, and his life the life of God.

In this connection it will be interesting to mention that as early as 1902 Iqbal wrote an article on Perfect Man based on 'Abdul Karīm al-Jīlī's *Insānūl Kāmil*. This article was published in the *Indian Antiquary* of Bombay. Later on, Iqbal incorporated this article in his book *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, but the original article is not available to-day.

Thus it will be seen that the topic of Perfect Man was very popular with Muslim writers—mystics, metaphysicians and theologians. They discussed the whole subject mainly from the mystical point of view, and Iqbal became conversant with most of the literature available very early in his career. Besides those mentioned above, there are others who have written on the subject, but it is unnecessary to mention them all here. Sufficient has been said to prove that Iqbal first became acquainted with the idea of Perfect Man or Superman through his Islamic studies.

It has been remarked above that the background to Iqbal's philosophy is provided by the strong reaction he showed to the doctrine of unityism. We have also mentioned that Ibnul 'Arabī affirmed this pantheistic doctrine, or *wahdat-al-wujūd*. The first great writer to oppose it was Taqiyud-Dīn Ibn-Taymiyya, who was born at Harran in 1263. A few years later Ibn-Taymiyya's father,

fleeing before the Mughals brought him to Damascus, where in due course he received an excellent education. It is said that he never forgot anything which he had once learnt, and his knowledge of theology and law was very extensive. His aim was to restore the pristine monotheism taught by the Prophet, and to purge Islam of heresies and corruptions. Bowing to no authority, but drawing his arguments from the traditions and practice of the early church, he expressed his convictions in the most forcible terms, without regard to consequences. Although several times thrown into prison, he could not be muzzled for long. He ended his days in captivity at Damascus. His funeral was largely attended, they say, by 200,000 men and 15,000 women. The principles which inspired Ibn-Taymiyya did not become forgotten after his death, although the immediate effect of his teachings was confined to a very small circle.

It was left to the great mystic, Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī, better known as the Mujaddid, to launch a campaign against the pantheistic conception in Hindustan. Shaikh Aḥmad was born in 1564. He received his early education at home and later on went to renowned scholars at various places for the study of Traditions, Exegesis and Philosophy. When he was at Agra, Abu'l-Faḍl and Faḍlī, Emperor Akbar's right-hand men, wanted to draw him into their circle. But this friendship did not last long because the Shaikh disapproved of Abu'l-Faḍl's religious views. After finishing his education, the Shaikh took to mystic discipline under the guidance of his father, and later on joined the *Naqshbandiyyā* order under Khwāja Bāqī-Billah. About this time Muslim society in India was passing through a crisis, and was much in need of a great reformer. This reformer appeared in the person of Shaikh Aḥmad, who, at the age of forty, felt the call. He started a campaign which went on gaining impetus so much that Emperor Jehangir decided to suppress it by imprisoning Shaikh Aḥmad after banishing to distant parts of the Empire those nobles who were devoted to the Shaikh. But the imprisonment greatly annoyed Mahābat Khān, the Governor of Kabul, who rose in rebellion and virtually took Jehangir a prisoner at Jhelum. At Shaikh's request Mahābat Khān released Jehangir. Jehangir soon set the Shaikh free, who thereafter became the special adviser of the king.

The conception of *waḥdat-i-shabūd* was developed by the Mujaddid as a challenge to *waḥdat-al-wujūd* or the unityism of Ibnul

‘Arabī, the leader of pantheistic mystics in Islam. Ibnul ‘Arabī held that Being is one, it is that only which exists. This Being is Allāh, and everything else is His manifestation. Hence the world is identical with Allāh, and the relation between the world and God according to Ibnul ‘Arabī, is one of identity. In establishing this identification he proceeds either from the negation of the world or from the affirmation of God. On the basis of negation of the world Ibnul ‘Arabī holds that the world as such is unreal, imaginary, objectively non-existent, and it is God alone that exists. The Mujaddid on the other hand says that there is no likeness whatsoever between the Divine and the human attributes. God is wholly other than the world, and the world exists in reality. If the world is unreal all moral responsibility of man becomes meaningless. While Ibnul ‘Arabī maintains that worship of any object whatsoever is the worship of Allāh, the Mujaddid insists that there is absolutely no relation between the world and its unique Creator except that the world has been created by Him and is a sign that indicates His hidden attributes. According to the Mujaddid:

God produces the world, not out of Himself as *wahdat-al-wujūd* or unityism would say, but out of nothing. Its being is due to an act of creation—creation out of nothing which is something absolutely inconceivable for the speculative consciousness and its offshoot, *viz.*, *wahdat-al-wujūd*. And He gives it an existence of its own, which is not God’s existence but other than it. So also He gives it certain qualities, consciousness, freedom, etc., which are not God’s qualities but its own. Thus it becomes an agent in its own right and therefore responsible for its actions. Being a mixture of *wujūd* and ‘*adam*—of being and non-being, it is essentially finite and limited, though it has a yearning for improvement. Consequently, it needs religion; and it needs a religious unity with all the attributes of perfection. However, being limited it cannot comprehend the infinite; it cannot see God. It can only believe in Him—if God could be pleased to let it know that He exists and wants it to act in such and such a manner. Revelation performs this function and opens the way to the realisation of the human yearning to live in harmony with Him and in His presence.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr B. A. Fārūqī: *The Mujaddid’s Conception of Tawhīd*, p. 184.



Although the Mujaddid and Iqbal both condemn Ibnul 'Arabī's pantheistic doctrine of unityism, the real import of their agreement lies in regarding life and the world as real and having an objective existence, against the conception of the world as merely illusionary and imaginary. Later on Syed Ahmad Brelvī also strongly condemned unityism, but by this time the whole controversy had assumed the role of a theoretical discussion with no obvious connection with everyday life. It was left for Iqbal to trace the connection and deal with the havoc that this doctrine was causing to the whole life of a people.

There is a great resemblance between the ideas of Iqbal and those of the Muslim divine, Imām al-Ghazālī, in the importance they place on intuition. Unfortunately Ghazālī failed to see any organic relationship between thought and intuition, and this failure forced him to draw a line of cleavage between the two, which Iqbal considered to be a mistake. Ghazālī was born at Tūs in 1058 and died in 1111. He was at one time Professor at the Nizāmiah College, Baghdād. He resigned his post at the Nizāmiah and set out on pilgrimage. After the pilgrimage he spent some time in travels and then returned to his native town of Tūs—intent on writing and worship and constant recitation of the Qur'ān. For some time he held a professorship at Nīshapūr but returned to end his days at Tūs. Ghazālī's search for religious truth exercised a profound and momentous influence upon the future history of Muslim thought. In a very interesting passage, Ghazālī tells us how from his youth upward he was possessed with an intense thirst for knowledge, which impelled him to study every form of religion and philosophy. But when he tried to distinguish the true from the false he found no sure test. At last he turned to Ṣūfism. He carefully studied the writings of mystics and as he read these it became clear to him that now he was on the right path. He realised that the higher stages of Ṣūfism could not be learned by study but had to be realised by experience, *i.e.*, ecstasy and moral transformation. According to Ghazālī and his followers: 'The ego is a simple, indivisible and immutable soul-substance, entirely different from the group of our mental states and unaffected by the passage of time.'<sup>1</sup>

Students of Western thought are always impressed by the value Nietzsche placed on hardness. But there have been several Orien-

<sup>1</sup> *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 95.

tal thinkers and mystics who have also placed hardness amongst the highest virtues. Iqbal particularly mentions 'Alī Hujwarī and Abu'l 'Ulā al-Ma'arrī. 'Alī Hujwarī, or to give him his full name, Abu'l-Hasan 'Alī b. Uthmān bin 'Alī al-Ghaznavī al-Jullalī al-Hujwarī was a native of Ghaznī in Afghanistan. He travelled far and wide over the Muslim world and finally came to Lahore and died there between 1072 and 1076 (Nicholson). He is held in great veneration throughout the Muslim world and is popularly known as Dāta Ganj Bakhsh. A fine mausoleum of pure marble has recently been erected over his grave in Lahore. His *magnum opus*, *Kashf-ul-Mahjūb*, was written in the latter years of his life—partly, at any rate, at Lahore. Its object is to put forth a complete system of Sūfism. He reconciled his theology with the advanced type of mysticism. He strenuously resists the doctrine that human personality can be merged and extinguished in the being of God. Iqbal tells us how, when a resident of Merv came to 'Alī Hujwarī and complained about his enemies, 'Alī Hujwarī gave him a long discourse on the virtue of hardness.

Similarly Abu'l 'Ulā al-Ma'arrī, the great Syrian poet, who was born in 973 at Ma'arratul-Numan, a Syrian town situated within 20 miles south of Aleppo, always extolled hardness. When a friend sent him a roasted partridge Ma'arrī addressed the partridge on the virtue of hardness in the following words: 'To be weak is the greatest crime in the world. If you were a hawk, nobody could have dared to serve you as repast like this.'

Iqbal, being essentially a practical philosopher, has very little in common with the scholastics; but he finds much to admire in their original thinking. There are two main schools of scholastic theologians among the Muslims—the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites. While Iqbal has much to criticise in both these schools he partially agrees with both. Agreement between Iqbal and the Ash'arites on the nature of Time and Space will be referred to later on, but it may be mentioned here that Iqbal agrees with the Ash'arites and with the modern relativist that Time and Space are not two distinct and absolutely independent categories, but rather there is one 'point-instant' or 'space-time continuum', as the scientists term it. But Iqbal differs from the Ash'arites in his view of the mutual relation between the point and the instant. Paradoxical as it may seem, several writers proclaim Iqbal as the



founder of modern scholasticism. This is evidently in view of Iqbal's attempts to reconstruct Muslim religious thought in the light of modern advances in philosophical and scientific knowledge. But we need not pursue the point.

Amongst the non-Islamic sources Iqbal extolled the dynamic philosophy of Sri Krishna and Sri Ramanuj. But beyond this there is very little affinity between any Oriental non-Islamic thinker and Iqbal until we come down to our own times. While Iqbal was preaching his philosophy of the ego, there was another great Oriental thinker, Aurobindo Ghose, talking of superman about the same time. Ghose says:

For what is supermanhood but a certain divine and harmonious absolute of all that is essential in man? He is made in God's image, but there is this difference between the divine Reality and its human representative, that everything which in the one is unlimited, spontaneous, absolute, harmonious, self-possessed, becomes in the other limited, relative, laboured, discordant, deformed, possessed by struggle, kept by subservience to one's possessions, lost by the transience and insecurity which come from wrong holding. But in this constant imperfection there is always a craving and an aspiration towards perfection.<sup>1</sup>

Iqbal and Ghose agree that supermanhood is not a special privilege of any class; it is not a spiritual aristocracy to be enjoyed only by a few people. But there is this fundamental difference between them, that Iqbal, as a practical philosopher, is more concerned with the training of his men and raising them into supermen than Ghose. Neither Iqbal's superman nor Ghose's is a Titan, but according to Ghose the superman is a mere dynamo of spiritual forces; while in Iqbal, along with spiritual uplift, physical development is not overlooked. Both recognise the importance of social purpose, but while Iqbal prescribes the minutest details of the society which he regards ideal, Ghose is content with merely referring to it. Ghose says:

The right relation of the individual with the collectivity is neither to pursue egoistically his own material or mental pro-

<sup>1</sup> Aurobindo Ghose: *Superman*, pp. 8-9. Published by the Ashram, Pondicherry, India.

gress or spiritual salvation without regard to his fellows, nor for the sake of the community, to suppress or maim his proper development, but to sum up in himself all its best and completest possibilities and pour them out by thought, action, and all other means on his surroundings, so that the whole race may approach nearer to the attainment of its supreme personalities.<sup>1</sup>

The object is laudable, but we are left in the dark as to the method of attaining it. The communists say that the only way to achieve it is through communism; national socialists try to prove the efficacy of their tenets; imperialists can see the regeneration of man and society only through their conquests. And Aurobindo Ghose is too vague in his description of the society he considers ideal for man to exercise any great beneficial influence.

Reference must be made before closing this chapter to Iqbal's conception of Space and Time. He discussed this age-old philosophical and scientific problem with great thoroughness. Before pointing out where he agrees with other Eastern thinkers, it may be well to state briefly his views. Broadly speaking, Iqbal is in general agreement with the Theory of Relativity about the nature of Time and Space. According to him, Space and Time are both relative and real, but Time is the more fundamental of the two. Though space-time is the matrix of all things, still the relation between Space and Time is akin to the relation between the body and the mind. Time is the mind of space. But Iqbal thinks that 'the purely physical point of view is only partially helpful in our understanding of the nature of Time. The right course is a careful psychological analysis of our conscious experience which alone reveals the true nature of Time.' For this Iqbal divides the inner life of the ego into an 'efficient ego' and an 'appreciative ego'. The time of the efficient ego is just a diversion of the space-time continuum. It is serial. The time of the 'appreciative ego' is non-serial.

As pointed out above, Iqbal agrees with the Ash'arites that Time and Space are not two distinct and absolutely independent categories; they represent one space-time continuum. But he differs from the Ash'arites in his view of the mutual relation between the

<sup>1</sup> *Arya*, Vol. II, p. 174. Published by the Ashram, Pondicherry, India.

point and the instant. According to Iqbal the instant is the more fundamental of the two. Iqbal criticises the doctrine of atomic time put forward by the Ash'arites, according to which time is a succession of individual nows. The Muslim thinker Ibn-i-Hazm refuted the Ash'arite notion of atomic time and atomic space. For Ibn-i-Hazm Space and Time are continuous, a view shared by some modern mathematicians. According to Iqbal, even Ibn-i-Hazm's doctrine does not solve the difficulties arising from the infinite divisibility of Space and Time.

Mullā Jalālud-Dīn Dawānī and the Sūfī poet 'Irāqī take a relativistic view of Time and regard Time as having a different stratum for different beings, possessing various grades between pure materiality and pure spirituality. 'Irāqī has also tried to reach the concept of Space as an infinite continuum. Fakhrūd-Dīn Rāzī gives his most serious attention to the problem of Time in his *Eastern Discussion*. Mīr Damād and Mullā Bāqir say that Time is born with the act of creation by which the Ultimate Ego realises and measures, so to speak, the infinite wealth of His creative possibilities. Ibn-i-Khaldūn was the first to submit Time to a psychological analysis and Iqbal says: '... in view of the nature of his conception of Time he may fairly be regarded as forerunner of Bergson.'<sup>1</sup>

It is not possible to describe here in detail Muslim thought on this subject; the brief summary given is meant mainly to show that the Muslim thinkers have always been interested in the nature of Time and Space, and that the main source of Iqbal's conception of Time and Space can be traced to the Qur'ān and to Muslim thinkers and mystics. That Iqbal's views agree with those of European thinkers, especially Einstein and Bergson, as will be shown in the next chapter, is only incidental. It has been said that Muslim theologians did not mean by their remarks (such as Imām Shāfa'ī's saying: 'Time is a sword') what Iqbal thinks they meant. Whether Iqbal's interpretation of these remarks and statements is correct or not, it is obvious that Muslim thinkers and even theologians were always interested in the nature of Time, and the conclusions they reached differed fundamentally from the popular views. When Iqbal was appointed Rhodes lecturer in

<sup>1</sup> *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 134. Flint says of Ibn-i-Khaldūn: 'Plato, Aristotle, Augustine were not his peers, and all others were unworthy of being even mentioned along with him.'

Oxford, he told a friend of mine that one of the subjects selected by him for the lectures was the Muslim conception of Time. This lecture would have shown the source of Iqbal's ideas in a way which nothing else can show now. But Iqbal always averred that his ideas of Time and Space were derived from the Qur'ān and the Muslim thinkers. According to him, Muslim thinkers have always been interested in the nature of Time because of the Prophet's identification of God with '*Dahr*' or Time, and because the Qur'ān regards alternation of the day and night as one of the greatest signs of God. The Qur'ān says:

Behold! In the creation  
Of the heavens and the earth;  
In the alternation  
Of the night and the Day

. . . . .  
Here indeed are Signs  
For a people that are wise.

II: 164

Not only this, but the Qur'ān alludes to the serial and non-serial aspects of duration in several verses. According to the Qur'ān if we look at the moment embodied in creation from the outside, that is to say, if we apprehend it intellectually, it is a process lasting through thousands of years; for one Divine day in the terminology of the Qur'ān, as of the Old Testament, is equal to 1,000 years. From another point of view the process of creation, lasting through thousands of years, is a single indivisible act.

Verily, all things  
Have We created  
With a fixed destiny,  
And Our Command  
Is but a single Act  
Like the twinkling of an eye.

LIV: 49-50

## 4

### *Iqbal and Western Thought*

یورپ میں بہت روشنی، علم و ہنر ہے  
حق یہ ہے کہ بے چشمہ حیواں ہے یہ ظلمات

Though Europe is radiant with the splendours of Arts  
and Sciences,  
It is the Valley of Darkness without the Fount of Life!

IQBAL was a keen student of Western philosophy and all his life studied the works of Western thinkers. That these studies influenced him to a certain extent was inevitable, but as he was essentially what Bertrand Russell calls a 'practical philosopher' the real advantage he derived from his Western studies was that by watching the conflict of ideas and creeds in the West he learnt to appreciate the value of creeds and movements of thought to practical life. However, his Western studies did influence his thought and philosophy, and it will be interesting to trace the points of affinity between his ideas and those of prominent Western thinkers. In a brief survey like this we shall have to confine ourselves to a comparison of the main points of Iqbal's philosophy with those of a few dominant figures in the history of Western thought.

The influence of the Greeks upon modern European thought cannot be over-emphasised. 'We Europeans are children of Hellas,' <sup>1</sup> says Fisher, and the beginning of Western thought must be traced to the galaxy of brilliant Greek thinkers. Greek thought also exercised a profound influence on Islamic thought, but Iqbal considered this influence harmful in important respects, and he continually emphasised that Islamic culture is essentially and fundamentally different from Greek culture. Of all the Greek

<sup>1</sup> H. A. L. Fisher: *A History of Europe*, p. 1. Edward Arnold and Co., London, 1937.

thinkers, Aristotle earned Iqbal's greatest admiration. In a brief note to some verses in which he criticises Plato's Theory of Ideas, he refers to Aristotle's criticism of Plato with approval. He also mentions Fārābī's vain attempt in *Al Jama bain ar-ra'ain* to prove that there is no essential difference between the views of Plato and Aristotle. There is some resemblance between Iqbal's Superman and Aristotle's Ideal Man. Aristotle thus defines his Ideal Man:

He is of a disposition to do men service, though he is ashamed to have a service done to him. To confer a kindness is a mark of superiority; to receive one is a mark of subordination. . . . He never feels malice, and always forgets and passes over injuries. His carriage is sedate, his voice deep, his speech measured; he is not given to hurry, for he is concerned about only a few things; he is not prone to vehemence for he thinks nothing very important. . . . He bears the accidents of life with dignity and grace, making the best of his circumstances, like a skilful general who marshals his limited forces with all the strategy of war. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Although Aristotle's Ideal Man differs from Iqbal's Perfect Man, some of his phrases irresistibly remind us of Iqbal's. For instance, 'he is of a disposition to do men service, though he is ashamed to have a service done to him' brings to mind Iqbal's well-known line:

الحذر از منت غیر الحذر

Beware of incurring obligations, beware!

Then 'his carriage is sedate, his voice deep, his speech measured' may be compared with:

نرم دم گفتگو گرم دم. جستجو

Gentle in speech, fierce in action.

Leaving Greek thought we come to modern European thinkers. Modern European thought begins with Bacon, who learned the inductive method from the Arabs. Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and the outstanding thinkers who followed, enriched his thought

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, IV, 3.



by developing deductive methods. Descartes established the independence of matter. Berkeley contended that matter was only a form of mind. Hume gave a phenomenalist interpretation to mind. Then came Kant. Kant's greatness lies in his teaching that all knowledge is not derived from the senses. Kant demonstrated the utter futility of intellectual effort when faced with the ultimate problems of life, and thus proved the philosophic necessity of faith. Proceeding on the basis of pure metaphysical argument, he found at the end of his *Critique of Pure Reason* that the existence of God, the freedom of the Will and similar problems are not capable of proof or disproof. The world itself became for him 'a hypothesis within a hypothesis, a dream within a dream'. But in his *Critique of Practical Reason* he found the meaning of life in these very problems or 'ideas', and recognised them as the First Principles of Experience. For instance, he found that without postulating the Freedom of the Will it is impossible to live a life of responsibility.

Iqbal also started with faith but he did not have to reason this out. The ceaseless activity of the ego can only be explained in terms of faith in the ultimate result of that activity. As regards scientific experiment, Iqbal starts with intuition and mystic experience as the only way to inner knowledge. Whereas Kant postulates the moral law as a sort of external command, for Iqbal the moral law arises out of the inner necessity of the ego's life. Thus while both Kant and Iqbal believe in faith and moral law, they recognise the necessity of these fundamental factors in different ways and for different reasons. For Iqbal, personality provides the measure of all things: that which fortifies personality is good, and that which tends to weaken it is bad.

Another difference may be noted between the standpoints of Iqbal and Kant. For Iqbal, freedom and immortality are rewards for ceaseless striving and come only to those who never relax their efforts. Kant brings in freedom and immortality in order to be able to think that ours is a just Universe, and that there is no fundamental discord between actions and their ultimate results. Kant is thrown back on religious orthodoxy, Iqbal is not.

After Kant we find some resemblance between Iqbal and Fichte. Fichte's system of philosophy arose out of his criticism of Kant's analysis of our process of knowing. Kant looked upon this as a construction of the mind's activity in relation to an element which

is quite alien to it, called the 'thing-in-itself'. Fichte rejects this alien element, and is thus left with the knowing mind alone, the self. Thus according to Fichte there must be a self that knows; in other words the ego posits itself. But if ego is to know it follows that there must be something to be known, and thus the ego posits non-ego. But non-ego which the ego contemplates and which is necessary to make knowledge possible is not something alien to the ego, its source is self itself. The non-ego is posited by the ego to render evolution possible through moral struggle and interaction. Beyond this conception of ego there is complete divergence between the views of Iqbal and Fichte. While Iqbal insists on the ego maintaining its individuality, according to Fichte 'There is but a single virtue—to forget oneself as individual. There is but a single vice—to look to oneself.'

The next great thinker between whose thought and Iqbal's philosophy there appears to be a resemblance is Nietzsche. In fact several writers have gone so far as to assert that Iqbal derived his whole philosophy from Nietzsche. For instance, Professor E. G. Browne says: 'Muhammad Iqbal has set forth his own doctrines (which as I understand them, are in the main an Oriental adaptation of Nietzsche's philosophy) in a short *mathnawī* poem entitled *Asrār-i-Khūdī*, lithographed at the University Press, Lahore, and translated into English with an Introduction and Notes by my friend and colleague Dr R. A. Nicholson.'<sup>1</sup> In dealing with Nietzsche one is faced with the problem of finding an authority whose interpretation will be universally accepted. Some writers have unduly criticised Nietzsche and others have absurdly overrated him. It is impossible to illustrate Nietzsche's meaning by brief quotations from his writings. Fine literary artist as he is, no author is more obscure and difficult to understand than Nietzsche; so much so that even students who have been studying him all their lives find it difficult to agree as to the meaning of some of his writings. It can easily be realised that giving quotations from such an author is not the best way of understanding him. Hence in order to explain Nietzsche's philosophy we must resort to a writer who is recognised as being impartial: Professor A. H. J. Knight. His study of Nietzsche is

<sup>1</sup> E. G. Browne: *A Literary History of Persia*, Vol. IV, p. 43. Cambridge University Press.

recognised as essentially objective and fundamentally correct, and we cannot do better than quote from this author freely.

Before tracing any resemblance between Iqbal's and Nietzsche's thought, what is, briefly, Nietzsche's philosophy? 'Dionysus, Recurrence, Superman; these ideas, and those dependent upon them, make up the most important part of Nietzsche's constructive philosophy, or, if one prefers it, of his religion,' writes Professor Knight.<sup>1</sup> For our comparison it will be better to deal with these three topics in the reverse order. So we shall start with the Superman. Most people, among whom there are many who have never studied Nietzsche and do not understand him, know that he talked about the Superman. A few years later Iqbal wrote on the same subject; so it was easy for those who had studied neither, or only one, of these great thinkers to imagine a connection between the philosophies of the two. We have to ascertain what kind of Superman Nietzsche wants to produce. The main characteristics of Nietzsche's Superman are admirably summed up by Knight as follows: 'Freedom from ethical restrictions, for great ends; active, creative greatness; joy; these shall be good. Fetters shall be thrown off and authority denied. This life shall be accepted as the only life, and as good, though terrible. All that impedes greatness, power, beauty, shall be abolished. The fears of sin, hell, death, conscience shall be exorcised. As there is no soul without body, there can be no spiritual greatness where the body is sick: therefore, health is immeasurably valuable. Pity is a sickness or a selfishness. It hinders action, or serves to give an unhealthy pleasure to the pitier. Hardness is a virtue beyond all price.'<sup>2</sup>

In *Also sprach Zarathustra* we have the following sentiments expressed by Nietzsche: 'Destroy for me, oh destroy for me,' says Zarathustra, 'the Good and Just.' And 'God is dead: Now let us will that the Superman live! Man is a thing that must be excelled.' Again 'God is dead, God died of his pity for man. Therefore be warned against pity.'

Nietzsche's statement about the death of God implies that once He was alive and now people have killed Him. This is tantamount

<sup>1</sup> A. H. J. Knight: *Some Aspects of the Life and Works of Nietzsche and particularly of his connection with Greek Literature and Thought*, p. 119. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>2</sup> A. H. J. Knight: *Some Aspects of the Life and Works of Nietzsche*, p. 127.

to an attempt to diagnose the ills of contemporary civilisation and to find a remedy for them. Being an atheist, Nietzsche maintained that belief in God and divine teleology tends to affect the dignity and significance of man. On the other hand, he also maintained that disbelief in the existence of God would threaten human life with nihilism and annihilation, and he wanted to save man from this. In the same parable, where he relates the story of the death of God through the mouth of man, he says, 'Must not we ourselves become gods to seem worthy of it? Never before was so great a deed performed—and all those born after us will by that very fact belong to a higher form of history than any that has hitherto existed.' (*Joyful Wisdom*, aph. 125.)

In order to escape the nihilism which is bound to result from a denial of the existence of God, Nietzsche put before mankind the ideal of Superman, who would be like a god for common men: their source of inspiration, their law-giver, their ruler, their guide; in short, the embodiment of all those qualities which people once claimed that God possessed.

In a passage in *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche tries to lay down the distinguishing features of his Superman; studying them, we can see where his Superman differs from those conceived by Darwin and Carlyle. While discussing the characteristics of the Superman, Nietzsche deliberately uses provocative language, for example, when he says that the Superman is the enemy of pity and is the embodiment of hardness and suffering. According to Nietzsche, those who preach pity look only to the 'creature' side of man and fail to appreciate that man has also another side, the 'creator' in him. 'In man there is both creator and creative' (*Beyond Good and Evil*). Having failed to appreciate the 'creator' side of man these people fail to realise that for self-perfection man does not need pity, but only hardness and suffering. To pity others or to be pitied by others, when one is undergoing suffering and tribulations, means for Nietzsche the defeat of the wholesome effect of suffering. In fact, it is the denial of life itself. Pity is opposed to the tonic passions, which serve to enhance the energy and feeling of life: pity's action is depressing. 'A man loses power when he pities' (*Antichrist*). According to Nietzsche the ideal Superman would be 'the Roman Caesar with Christ's soul'.

It will be seen that there is much in Nietzsche's characterisation of Superman with which Iqbal agrees. But owing to his atheistic

outlook and materialistic background Nietzsche failed to comprehend that only by affirming the spiritual basis of life can man realise the highest ideal of perfection. For Iqbal's Perfect Man religion plays an important part, but it ceases to be a mere dogma or ritual. Rather does it become a matter of personal assimilation of life and power. The Perfect Man acquires a free personality, free not in the sense that he is no longer subject to law, but free in the sense that he discovers the ultimate source of law within the depths of his own consciousness.

He no longer needs any persuasion that there is a justification for this world; his own creative activity convinces him.

As in the case of Nietzsche's Superman the greatest task before the Perfect Man is to fight the existing order of things, but this fight does not spring out of any resentment or hatred.

The Perfect Man is the embodiment of a power which he uses ruthlessly to crush and exterminate all those who obstruct him, but unlike Nietzsche's Superman he is at the same time sympathetic and kind to those who deserve his sympathy or kindness. In short, the Perfect Man employs power as well as compassion, force as well as persuasion to achieve his mission, but unlike the Superman he is not beyond the sphere of good and evil.

Now we come to the second chief idea in Nietzsche's philosophy of life: the idea of Eternal Recurrence. It is in *Also sprach Zarathustra* that Nietzsche adopts Recurrence as part of his own system:

Sing and bubble over, O Zarathustra, heal thy soul with new songs: that thou mayst bear thy great fate; which was never yet any man's fate!

For thy beasts know well, O Zarathustra, who thou art and must become: see thou art the teacher of Eternal Recurrence—that is now thy fate!

\* \* \*

I come again, with this sun, with this earth, with this eagle, with this snake—not to a new life or better life or similar life; I come eternally again to this life and same life, in the greatest things and also in the smallest things, that I may teach again the Eternal Recurrence of all things—that I may speak again the word of the great midday of the earth and of men, that I may again proclaim to men the Superman.



This is not the moment to consider the merits of the idea of Eternal Recurrence, as we are here mainly concerned with what Iqbal thinks of it. But before doing this we have to be clear about the idea itself. When properly analysed, it really means that man's progress is not in an ascending line but in a circle. Whatever progress we may have attained while producing the Superman, the same process must be gone through again; man will again have to start from the same point from which he originally started and he will have to pass through the same stages of development. Thus the idea makes the future of mankind sombre and the whole outlook mainly fatalistic. Whatever we may do, whatever we may achieve counts for little. The circle of human development, culminating in the production of the Superman, must be repeated mechanically. The whole prospect is gloomy and pessimistic. Thus the idea is most demoralising and depressing. If we have to go back to the point from where we started, there is no ground for excitement.

Now let us see what Iqbal thinks of the idea of Eternal Recurrence. According to Iqbal:

It is only a more rigid kind of mechanism, based not on an ascertained fact but only on a working hypothesis of science. Nor does Nietzsche seriously grapple with the question of Time. He takes it objectively and regards it merely as an infinite series of events returning to itself over and over again. Now Time, regarded as a perpetual circular movement, makes immortality absolutely intolerable. Nietzsche himself feels this, and describes his doctrine, not as one of immortality, but rather as a view of life which would make immortality endurable. And what makes immortality bearable, according to Nietzsche? It is the expectation that a recurrence of the combination of energy-centres which constitutes my personal existence is a necessary factor in the birth of that ideal combination of energy-centres which he calls 'Superman'. But the Superman has been an infinite number of times before. His birth is inevitable; how can the prospect give me any aspiration? We can aspire only to what is absolutely new, and the absolutely new is unthinkable on Nietzsche's view, which is nothing more than a Fatalism worse than the one summed up in the word *Qismat*. Such a doctrine, far from keying up the human organism for the fight



of life, tends to destroy its action-tendencies and relaxes the tension of the ego.<sup>1</sup>

We can pass on to the third head of Nietzsche's philosophy, the Dionysian principle. Dionysus was the God of wine and fertility. His worship was orgiastic and used to be performed at intervals with disgusting excesses of savagery, such as are described in the *Bacchæ*. According to legend, he was torn to pieces by the women of Thrace but he rose again, and mystery rites were performed mainly founded upon this martyrdom and resurrection. Dionysian worship began in barbarian countries, where it was practised with a savage licence shocking to the Greek mind. So it was, according to Nietzsche, kept out of Greece at first by the power of Apollo. Then as the new cult gained strength and made converts, the two hostile deities had to come to terms. Actually they came to a compromise, so that the extreme manifestations of Dionysian origin were never known in Greece. But the Dionysian *Weltanschauung* swiftly replaced the Apolline. Nietzsche himself describes this *Weltanschauung*:

The affirmative answer to life even in its strangest and hardest problems; the will to life, rejoicing, in the sacrifice of its highest types, as its own inexhaustible nature that I call Dionysiac, that I understood as a bridge to the psychology of the tragic poet. Not in order to rid oneself of pity and fear, not in order to purge oneself of a dangerous emotion through an unrestrained release. Aristotle misunderstood it in this sense, but actually to be far beyond pity and fear, the eternal joy of Becoming—that joy which also includes the joy in Destroying.<sup>2</sup>

The symbol of Dionysus is not the Dream, but Intoxication, Ecstasy, Exaltation. In aphorism 370 '*Was ist Romantik?*' Nietzsche further explains what Dionysiasm is:

But there are sufferers of two kinds, in the first place those who suffer from the overfullness of life. . . . He who is most right in the fullness, the Dionysiac god and man cannot only permit himself to see what is frightful and questionable, but can even permit himself frightful actions and every luxury of destruction, disintegration, denial, where he is concerned, that which

<sup>1</sup> *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> A. H. J. Knight, op. cit., p. 162.

is evil, senseless and ugly seems, so to speak, permitted, in consequence of an excess of creative, fructifying powers, which would be able to make a luxuriant land of fruit out of any desert. . . . The longing for destruction, change, growth, may be the expression of a power that is overfull and pregnant with the future (my term for it, as is known, is the word Dionysiac).<sup>1</sup>

So far as the affirmative answer to life is concerned, Iqbal agrees with Nietzsche that in spite of all the evil one finds in life one has to make the best of it. Similarly with creating a 'land of fruit' out of desert, the missions of Nietzsche and Iqbal lead to the same goal. But beyond this there is nothing in Iqbal corresponding to Dionysian *Weltanschauung* and we can leave the matter at that. It is safe to say that there is nothing Dionysian in Iqbal.

Now we can consider some of the main ideas dependent upon the three-headed philosophy of Nietzsche described above: such ideas as immoralism, the inversion of values, the will to power; Herrenmoral and Sklavenmoral, the position of women and a united Europe. As regards immoralism and the inversion of values, Nietzsche's polemic against Christianity and Christian morals is mainly directed against false conceptions introduced by Christian priests. Nietzsche adopts an attitude of moral relativism: that only is good which leads to enhancement of the will to power, and because in different times and climes it is possible to achieve this result with the help of different moral devices, he did not see any point in prescribing a universal code of morals. Nietzsche insisted on the inversion of values because he saw in the prevailing Christian values nothing but nihilism and decadence. While both Nietzsche and Iqbal agree regarding the evil effects of prevailing values, Iqbal does not believe in moral relativism; for him all moral values are eternal. That the main reason for Iqbal adopting this attitude was his religious background is in a way admitted by Nietzsche when he says, 'If Islam despises Christianity it is justified a thousand times over, for Islam presupposes men' (*Antichrist*).

As regards the Will to Power, we must first try to understand what it actually is. In *Der Antichrist* Nietzsche defines the Will to Power in the following lines: 'What is good? Everything which increases the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

man. What is bad? Everything which emanates from weakness.' In *Der Wille zur Macht* Nietzsche says: 'This world is the Will to Power—and nothing more! And you yourselves are this Will to Power and nothing more!' In fact in *Der Wille zur Macht* life becomes reducible to the Will to Power. Nietzsche never agreed that the driving force of life was merely *Wille zum Leben*; according to him, life is very seldom a struggle for existence. As a rule it is a struggle to increase power. This Will to Power takes an infinite variety of forms and lies beneath every activity of every living thing on earth. Not with any object but just because *Wille zur Macht* is good in itself. Because of this Will to Power no ethical code has any validity. Morality has been only a weapon in the hands of those who had the will to gain power, various systems suiting various types and ends.

By the Will to Power Nietzsche does not mean mere physical and brute strength; he includes intellectual and moral strength also. A man of strong impulses, who succeeds in controlling them, will be, according to Nietzsche, a man possessing the Will to Power. Mere political ascendancy or possession of wealth or physical power does not constitute power for him. 'Where I found a living thing, there found I Will to Power; and even in the will of several found I the will to be master.' (*Zarathustra*.) Iqbal agrees with Nietzsche so far as to say that power is synonymous with truth and determines the standard of values. He who is strong and powerful is on the right side, and he who is weak is destined to be reckoned as false.

Nietzsche distinguishes two kinds of morality—master morality (*Herrenmoral*) and slave morality (*Sklavenmoral*). The master morality is fundamentally active and positive, while the slave morality treats evil as the primary concept. The promulgators of master morality were strong, noble, full of vitality, brave and adventurous. Master morality calls those traits good which make a man respected and even feared: power, pride, freshness and ability to be a good friend and noble enemy. In the slave morality whatever the noble aristocrat possesses is called bad, and here a good man is a safe man, who is good-natured and easily deceived. Nietzsche emphasises that *Herrenmoral* is not meant for the common people. This means that Nietzsche is an inveterate hater of Socialism, while Iqbal is a firm believer in Socialism. There is no doubt that *Herrenmoral* leads to power, progress and happiness,

while Sklavenmoral leads to mediocrity and pathetic contentment, but there seems to be no reason why slaves should not become the Herrenvolk by adopting their morals. Iqbal claims that every human being, master or slave, is a finite centre of possibilities which can be improved and evolved under healthy influences. In a note on Muslim Democracy he says:

The Democracy of Europe overshadowed by socialistic agitation and anarchical fear—originated mainly in the economic regeneration of European societies. Nietzsche, however, abhors this 'rule of the herd', and hopeless of the plebeian, he based all higher culture on the cultivation and growth of an Aristocracy of Supermen. But is the plebeian so absolutely hopeless? The Democracy of Islam did not grow out of the extension of economic opportunity; it is a spiritual principle based on the assumption that every human being is a centre of latent power, the possibilities of which can be developed by cultivating a certain type of character. Out of the plebeian material Islam has formed men of the noblest type of life and power. Is not, then, the Democracy of early Islam an experimental refutation of the ideas of Nietzsche?<sup>1</sup>

Concerning the attitude to women, there is no getting away from the fact that in spite of Nietzsche's well-known statement that the highest woman is a higher being than the highest man, though rarer, he had a very poor opinion of the fair sex. Iqbal on the other hand sees in woman the hope for mankind and wants to pay divine honours to Ḥaḍrat Fāṭima. No doubt Iqbal holds that the place of men and women in the world can never be quite the same and it must be admitted that from the modern standpoint his attitude towards woman could not in certain respects be regarded as progressive; still he recognises the essential nobility of woman's part in life.

While Nietzsche talks of a good European and a united Europe, Iqbal talks of a united humanity.

Thus it will be seen that there is fundamentally no coincidence between the basic ideas of Iqbal and Nietzsche. The two present entirely different views of life which are poles apart. One believes in a division of humanity into water-tight compartments,

<sup>1</sup> 'Muslim Democracy' in the *New Era*, 1916, p. 251.

resembling Manu's caste-system; the other wants to abolish all such distinctions. As remarked before, those writers who have talked of resemblance between the two have not taken the pains to study either, and most of them can be ignored. But lately there has appeared a dissertation in which the author says that there is enough internal evidence in Iqbal's works to show that Iqbal borrowed most of his ideas from Nietzsche. He has classified this internal evidence under three heads:

- (1) Both Iqbal and Nietzsche criticise Plato.
- (2) According to both, man has to pass through three stages.
- (3) Both have mentioned the story of the diamond and coal to exalt hardness.

It is undoubtedly true that both Iqbal and Nietzsche criticise Plato, but for a scholar to say only that and no more is tantamount to misleading by revealing only a half truth. Let us first find out why Nietzsche condemns Plato. In the words of Professor Knight, 'The mission of Socrates and Plato, he says, was to secure the control of all the instincts by the reason; his [Nietzsche's] own creed, at this time, was the unchecked dominance of natural instincts. Life is "Will to Power"; and it is only men like Socrates who are mean and base ("Socrates was Mob"), who deny that it is rightly so. Socrates is the end, the deliberate destroyer, of all before him that was fine and admirable, of the glorious myths of tragedy, music, lyricism. He is the first and completest decadent.'<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche maintains that the sayings and teachings of the Platonic dialogues are nearly all those of Socrates, not of Plato. Hence 'the criticisms that he levels against Plato are in effect those brought against Socrates—anti-artist, hypocrite moraliser—plus the special charge that Plato wrote extremely badly, and was, in fact, a bore. Only once does Nietzsche praise him, and that in a passage where he suggests that he might have been great, incomparably great, had he never come under Socrates' influence.'<sup>2</sup>

Thus we see that Nietzsche dislikes Plato because he follows Socratic methods, and he hates Socrates because Socrates has introduced rational methods instead of following instincts. Now

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 57. Few would agree that Plato wrote badly. As Sir Maurice Bowra says, 'Plato was a stylist of incomparable range and charm, a prose-poet and a master of narrative.'



let us study Iqbal's criticism of Plato. In a letter to Professor Nicholson Iqbal writes:

'My criticism of Plato is directed against those philosophical systems which hold up death rather than life as their ideal, systems which ignore the greatest obstruction to life, namely, matter, and teach us to run away from it instead of absorbing it.'<sup>1</sup> Along with Plato Iqbal criticises all those thinkers and poets, like Ibnul 'Arabī and Ḥāfīz, who advocate renunciation of life. It will be clear from the above that, although Iqbal and Nietzsche both criticise Plato, they do so for different reasons. And to trace the fountain-head of Iqbal's thought from the mere fact that he also, like Nietzsche, criticises Plato is not justified.<sup>2</sup>

According to Nietzsche, man has to pass through the following three stages: Camel; Tiger; Child.

According to Iqbal, man has to pass through these three stages: Obedience to the Law; Self-control; Vicegerency of God.

It is obvious that the only factor common to these thinkers is the number three! But another Muslim thinker, 'Abdul Karīm al-Jīlī, also considers three stages necessary for man's development. 'Abdul Karīm lived nearly six centuries before Nietzsche and Iqbal had studied 'Abdul Karīm before he knew anything about Nietzsche. In any case to seek resemblance of thought on such slender evidence is not reasonable. We know that most of the Islamic religious ritual—in fact the ritual in all Semitic religions—is repeated thrice, and if Iqbal needed any inspiration about the number of stages necessary for man's evolution, there was certainly no need for him to turn to Nietzsche. One fact

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Professor R. A. Nicholson in his Introduction to *The Secrets of the Self*, p. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> Plato's influence on the development of Islamic mysticism will be seen from the following remarks of Professor Nicholson, but most scholars maintain that Plato's teaching did not actually lead to holding up death rather than life as the ideal: 'The direct influence of Platonism on Moslem thought has been comparatively slight. When the Moslems began to study Greek philosophy they turned to Aristotle. The genuine writings of Aristotle, however, were not accessible to them. They studied translations which were the work of Neoplatonists, so that what they believed to be Aristotelian doctrine, was in fact the philosophy of Plotinus, Proclus, and the later Neoplatonic school. Indirectly, therefore, Plato has profoundly influenced the intellectual and spiritual development of Islam and may be called, if not the father of Mohammedan mysticism, at any rate its presiding genius.' Here it may be recorded that many students of Iqbal do not agree with him in his criticism of Plato, but here we are not considering whether Iqbal was justified in his criticism.



should be mentioned here. Iqbal, when describing obedience, mentions the many good points of the camel. But the utility of a camel, his obedience and hardihood are well-known themes in Muslim literature; these qualities are even referred to in the Qur'ān. Hence this one illustration cannot be considered sufficient for tracing any resemblance between Iqbal and Nietzsche.

As regards the story of the diamond and coal, let us compare the story as told by Nietzsche and Iqbal.

This is Nietzsche's description:

'Why so hard?' said the kitchen coal once to the diamond:  
'Are we not then near relations?'

'Why so soft? O my brothers, thus I ask you: are ye not then my brothers?'

Why so soft, so yielding and submitting? Why is so much evasion, denial in your heart? So little fate in your gaze?

And willed ye not to be fates and relentless: how could ye one day—conquer with me?

And if your hardness will not flash, and cut in pieces: how could ye one day create with me?

For all creators are hard. And delight it must seem to you, to press your hand on centuries as on wax—

Delight to write on the will of centuries as on bronze—harder than bronze, nobler than bronze. Only the noblest is quite hard.

This new commandment, O my brother, I put up over you: become hard!'

Iqbal says:

#### THE STORY OF THE DIAMOND AND THE COAL

Now I will open one more gate of Truth,  
I will tell thee another tale.  
The coal in the mine said to the diamond,  
'O thou entrusted with splendours everlasting,  
We are comrades, and our being is one;  
The source of our existence is the same,  
Yet while I die here in the anguish of worthlessness,  
Thou art set on the crowns of emperors.  
My stuff is so vile that I am valued less than earth,  
Whereas the mirror's heart is rent by thy beauty.  
My darkness illumines the chafing-dish,  
Then my substance is incinerated at last.

Every one puts the sole of his foot on my head  
 And covers my stock of existence with ashes.  
 My fate must needs be deplored;  
 Dost thou know what is the gist of my being?  
 Thou art a condensed wavelet of smoke,  
 Endowed with a single spark.  
 Both in feature and nature thou art star-like,  
 Splendours rise from every side of thee.  
 Now thou becomest the light of a monarch's eye,  
 Now thou adornest the haft of a dagger.'  
 'O sagacious friend!' said the diamond,  
 'Dark earth, when hardened, becomes in dignity as a bezel  
 Having been at strife with its environment,  
 It is ripened by the struggle and grows hard like a stone.  
 'Tis this ripeness that has endowed my form with light  
 And filled my bosom with radiance.  
 Because thy body is soft, thou art burnt.  
 Be void of fear, grief and anxiety;  
 Be hard as a stone, be a diamond!  
 Whosoever strives hard and grips tight,  
 The two worlds are illumined by him.  
 A little earth is the origin of the Black Stone  
 Which puts forth its head in the Ka'ba:  
 Its rank is higher than Sinai,  
 It is kissed by the swarthy and the fair.  
 In solidity consists the glory of Life;  
 Weakness is worthlessness and immaturity.'

Now it will be seen that the story was first told by Nietzsche. Iqbal liked it and narrated it in his own inimitable way. Iqbal, when praising hardness, has even described in verse Abu'l 'Ulā al-Ma'arri's experience, already referred to in the previous chapter. He has translated poems of several English and German poets, for instance, Emerson's *The Mountain and the Squirrel*. Does it mean that Iqbal has borrowed his philosophy from Emerson? When we keep in our minds the background of Iqbal's philosophy—a reaction to philosophies of self-renunciation, we can realise that it was inevitable that he should extol hardness. When mentioning this, if he restates a story originally told by Nietzsche, we cannot attach much importance to it so far as his philosophy is concerned.

Thus it will be seen that this reference to internal evidence is nothing more than loose thinking on the part of a few critics.

Having proved that so far as basic thought is concerned there is nothing common between Iqbal's philosophy and Nietzsche's thought, and having exposed the fallacies of those who talk of

internal evidence as providing a clue to the source of Iqbal's thought, it will be interesting to see what Iqbal himself has to say about Nietzsche. It has been frequently remarked that Iqbal disliked Nietzsche intently. Whether this is a fact can be seen by referring to what Iqbal has said. In a poem written a few years before his death, Iqbal said:

اگر ہوتا وہ مجذوب فرنگی اس زمانے میں  
تو اقبال اس کو سمجھاتا مقام کبریا کیا ہے

Had that *Majdhūb* of Europe been alive today,  
Iqbal would have explained to him the place of God.

It will be seen that Iqbal calls Nietzsche, *Majdhūb*. Now *Majdhūb* in Muslim mysticism is a person in a stage of spiritual development, characterised by a constant state of ecstasy and rapture. This stage is, in some cases, due to direct illumination, and in others attained as a result of vigorous discipline. Iqbal does not think that Nietzsche was insane in the accepted sense of the term. Nietzsche certainly denied the existence of God, but that was, according to Iqbal, Nietzsche's loss. Legend says that St Paul on his journey to Rome turned aside to visit Virgil's tomb near Naples, and that weeping over it he claimed:

What a man would I have made of thee  
Had I found thee alive  
O greatest of the poets.

Iqbal's sentiments for Nietzsche bear a close resemblance to those St Paul is said to have experienced on visiting Virgil's tomb.

In *Payām-i-Mashriq*, Iqbal says:

گر نوا خواہی ز پیش او گریز در نئے کلش غریبوتر است  
نیشتر اندر دل مغرب نشرو دستس از خون چلیپا احمر است  
آن کہ بر طرح عرم، تنخانہ ساخت قلب او مومن و داعش کافر است

If thou dost desire the melodious tunes, away from him,  
In the scratch of his pen is the noise of the thunder.

He put a dagger in the breast of the West,  
 His hand is besmeared with the blood of the Church.  
 He constructed a temple on the lines of the Ka'ba;  
 His heart is *Momin* but his mind is steeped in disbelief.<sup>1</sup>

There is ample evidence to show that Iqbal had, during his stay in Europe, studied Nietzsche and was considerably attracted and impressed by his ideas, especially where he agreed with the Muslim thinkers. He has also acknowledged Nietzsche's contribution to human thought. In fact he gives him credit for much, but at the same time points out the main defects of his *Weltanschauung*.

Summing up, it can be stated that while Iqbal and Nietzsche agree on several points, they also differ on some fundamental concepts. While Nietzsche was an atheist, Iqbal was deeply religious; while Nietzsche was an aristocrat, Iqbal was for the masses; while Nietzsche was anti-socialist, Iqbal was socialist. Thus their philosophies differed.

Iqbal has certainly described in verse some stories and an aphorism or two originally mentioned by Nietzsche. But he has also translated poems of several other poets, and has in several cases given entirely new adaptations of old masterpieces. We must bear in mind that here we are concerned mainly with Nietzsche's influence on Iqbal as a thinker and not his influence as an artist. After all Nietzsche was a very great artist in prose and verse and naturally exercised a great influence on other literary artists. Let us once more quote Professor Knight in this connection:

But as Schiller's influence faded, from 1900 onwards, Nietzsche's grew beyond all bounds and all reason and nearly every poet of any pretensions fell under his sway.<sup>2</sup>

Iqbal's ideas on theism show affinity with those of the English philosopher James Ward. As we have seen, Iqbal conceives Ultimate Reality as Ego mainly because He responds to our call. From such an Ego other egos proceed. Thus Iqbal arrives at spiritual pluralism. Starting from experience Ward also believes in pluralism, which assumes that the world is made up of

<sup>1</sup> This line has a reference to the Prophet's remarks about the Arab poet Omayya. Nietzsche is a disbeliever because he denied the existence of God. He is *Momin* because his views show remarkable resemblance to Islamic tenets.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit., p. 6.

individuals, each distinguished from others by his characteristic behaviour. But pluralism cannot explain the ordered world in which we live, it cannot give us any clue to the understanding of the relationship which each ego or monad bears to others. To explain this we have to believe in 'inevitable contingency' not only in human affairs, not in animated nature alone, but also in the psychic world. Yet we find that there is a tendency to replace this mere contingency by a definite progression. As we rise higher in the scale of being we find that there is greater and greater guidance and direction. From this Ward concludes that there is some relationship between the monads, depending upon the stage of being. The lowest are most contingent, while the highest are most purposive. These considerations led Ward from pluralism to theism. There are monads higher than ourselves, and above all there is the Supreme Monad—God. But Ward does not conceive God as severed from us. According to him He is one among many and not the Absolute including them all. The world is the joint product of the innumerable free agents working and striving together towards the creation of a stable system. According to Ward, though God is the creator of the world yet in the creation of human beings He has actually created creators, possessing freedom and power of initiative. In this He has imposed limits on Himself. This self-limitation by God means a living God with a living world. Iqbal is in complete agreement with the theistic monadism of Ward and he further maintains that it is compatible with the spirit of the Qur'ān.

After Ward the closest parallel with Iqbal in Western thought is Henri Bergson. Bergson starts with the fact that change is the fundamental reality of the Universe. Life is a continuous stream of change all round, but our intellectual vision gives us the impression that Life is made up of isolated states and things. Our outward perceptions also mislead us, because they are meant to equip us not with a knowledge of Reality but with practical guidance in everyday life. Intellect concerns itself with the appearance of life, which is space and serial time, while the Reality reveals itself in the unity of our consciousness which is known to us intuitionally and which exists in 'pure time' or '*la durée*'. Reality thus known is in the nature of a Creative Impulse, the '*Élan Vital*', which is a creative change. This tremendous push forward drives



man and beast before it, but its path is absolutely unpredictable. According to Bergson, the forward push exists for its own sake, and has no implications of future purpose. Iqbal also believes in the reality of change, but does not agree with Bergson's creative impulse. Reminiscent of Schopenhauer's blind Will, such a principle leaves no scope for personality. Indeed it seems absurd to think of the human ego under Bergson's system. Iqbal and Bergson both believe in the reality of 'pure time' as distinguished from 'serial time'. But as Iqbal says: 'I venture to think that the error of Bergson consists in regarding time as prior to self, of which alone pure duration is predictable.' There are numerous differences between the thought of Iqbal and Bergson. In Bergson the conflict of mind and matter means a dualism in the whole universe, which is never resolved into a unity. In Iqbal we have the all-embracing Ego which is God. Similarly Bergson's uncompromising condemnation of Intellect finds no parallel in Iqbal. Iqbal's '*Ishq*' is a more vital assimilative process than Bergson's intuition. Iqbal assigns to Intellect a position subordinate to '*Ishq*', but visualises a perfect harmony of the two.

Before closing this chapter, we must refer once more to Iqbal's conception of Time and Space, and trace here the connection between Iqbal's thought and that of European thinkers. Iqbal disagrees with Newton's objective view of Time. He also criticises Nietzsche's views of Time and Space, which were expressed mainly in connection with his doctrine of Eternal Recurrence. Iqbal has a great admiration for Einstein and dedicates a whole poem to him in *Payām-i-Mashriq*.

The following lines are from this poem:

جلوہ می خواست مانند کلیم ناصبور  
تا ضمیر مستنیر او کشودا سرار نور  
از فراز آسمان تا چشم آدم یک نفس  
زود پروازے کہ پروازش نیاید در شعور

Impatient like Moses, he wanted a manifestation of the Glorious.  
So his bright intellect resolved the mysteries of light,



Whose flight from the heights of the sky to the observer's eye  
takes but one instant,  
And is so swift that it cannot even be conceived.

Einstein has shown that the conception of an absolute Time and an absolute Space is untenable both on theoretical and experimental grounds. According to the Theory of Relativity, Time and Space are not absolute and separate from each other, but relative and mutually dependent. According to this theory, the universe does not consist of two separate categories, Time and Space, but of a single Space-time continuum. Consequently our three-dimensional world has now become four-dimensional, because in addition to length, breadth and height we require time to determine an event completely. For Einstein, Space-time is real but relative to the observer.

Iqbal is in general agreement with the Theory of Relativity, but he raises an objection to the Theory regarding Time as a fourth dimension of Space. According to Iqbal this would mean that the future is as indubitably fixed as the past, and Time would cease to be a free creative movement. This is not a correct view of the Theory of Relativity, for it does not regard Time as a fourth dimension of Space, but of the Space-time continuum. But Iqbal proceeds to analyse further aspects of Time which the theory does not consider. For instance, he agrees with Bergson about duration in Time. One point worth noting here is that Iqbal arrived at his conclusions regarding Time long before the Theory of Relativity was known by any but a small circle of mathematicians and scientists.

Some European thinkers like McTaggart have been misled in assuming the unreality of Time by not differentiating serial time from non-serial. They assume that serial time is final. In this connection Iqbal says:

If we regard past, present and future as essential to Time, then we picture Time as a straight line, part of which we have travelled and left behind, and part lying yet untravelled before us. This is taking Time not as a living creative movement, but as a static absolute, holding the ordered multiplicity of fully shaped cosmic events revealed serially like the pictures of a film to the outside observer.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 54-5.

According to Iqbal the future exists only as an open possibility and not as a fixed reality. Here the modern quantum theory supports his opinion.

In one of his letters to Professor Nicholson of Cambridge Iqbal once mentioned that his views showed a remarkable degree of agreement with the views of the British philosopher Samuel Alexander. The philosophy of Alexander is systematically developed in *Space, Time and Deity* (1920). The first two words of the title indicate Alexander's starting-point; not space and time considered in separation but space-time in unity as the universal matrix of existence, out of which come all material forms, living organisms and human persons. But Alexander foreshadows a next stage beyond the human and beyond anything that human intelligence has in its possession. This he calls Deity. A comparative study of the ideas of Iqbal and Alexander would be interesting.

While we have indicated above the points of agreement between Iqbal's philosophy and the thought of prominent European philosophers, enough has been said to demonstrate clearly that in several respects Iqbal's philosophy of ego is essentially original. But, as in the case of Plato, some of his thoughts bear close resemblance to those of other thinkers. It could not be otherwise; he owes much to the thought of his predecessors.

To sum up, Iqbal shows some points of affinity with several European thinkers, notably Fichte, Nietzsche, Bergson, Ward and Einstein. The conception of the ego is common to Fichte and Iqbal, and in his idea of Time Iqbal agrees with Einstein and Bergson. But we must bear in mind that Time occupies only a minor place in Iqbal's philosophy of the ego, and the origin of Iqbal's theory of Time can be traced to Muslim thought. The fact that he published his conception of Time, mostly in agreement with Einstein's Theory of Relativity, long before much was known about the Theory beyond the limited circle of mathematicians, provides an indication of his originality.

## *Iqbal's Poetic Art*

شعر را مقصود اگر آدم گری است  
شاعری ہم وارث پیغمبری است

If the object of poetry is to make man,  
The poet is in direct lineage with the prophets!

TO IQBAL, poetry was 'the aureole of true philosophy and a complete science' whose object was to appeal to the finer side of human nature, to strengthen it, and to come to the rescue of mankind in its struggle against all that is ignoble and ugly. According to Iqbal, poetry which fails to awaken in man sympathy for neglected truths and to provide guidance towards the light has completely failed in its great mission. To him the true function of a poet is to fit man for a more courageous grappling with life's problems and to enable him to overcome all obstacles. Hence before considering his poetry it will be helpful if we understand Iqbal's conception of art. For him the true aim of all art is to make human life rich and beautiful, and art that fails to do this has failed in its great mission.

اے اہل نظر ذوق نظر خوب ہے لیکن  
جوشے کی حقیقت کو نہ دیکھے وہ نظر کیا  
مقصود ہنس و زحیات ابدی ہے  
یہ ایک نفس یا دو نفس مثل شرر کیا

بے معجزہ دنیا میں ابھرتی نہیں تو میں  
جو ضرب کلیسی نہیں رکھتا وہ ہنر کیا

O wise ones! It is well to have a thirst for knowledge,  
But what is in art that fails to grasp the reality of things?  
The object of all art is to attain the warmth of life immortal.  
What avails a spasm or two that vanish like sparks?  
Without a miracle nations cannot rise—  
What is art without the striking power of Moses' staff?

If art does not contribute to the fullness and exuberance of life and fails to provide guidance for humanity in the various problems that baffle it, that art is meaningless. In his introduction to the *Muraqqa-i-Chughtā'ī* Iqbal says:

The spiritual health of a people largely depends on the kind of inspiration which their poets and artists receive. But inspiration is not a matter of choice. It is a gift, the character of which cannot be critically judged by the recipient before accepting it. It comes to the individual unsolicited and only to socialise itself. For this reason the personality that receives and the life-quality of that which is received are matters of the utmost importance for mankind. The inspiration of a single decadent, if his art can lure his fellows to his song or pictures, may prove more ruinous to a people than whole battalions of an Atilla or Changiz. . . . To permit the visible to shape the invisible, to seek what is scientifically called adjustment with Nature is to recognise her mastery over the spirit of man. Power comes from resisting her stimuli and not from exposing ourselves to their action. Resistance to what is, with a view to create what ought to be, is health and life. All else is decay and death. Both God and man live by perpetual creation.<sup>1</sup>

The artist is constantly struggling with his environment to get the upper hand, and the struggle enables the inner powers of his life to unfold themselves and to produce art. This struggle or state of tension helps the development of one's personality or ego, which should be the true aim of all art. Thus we have a test for art as for all other human activities. Art that fortifies the ego is

<sup>1</sup> *Muraqqa-i-Chughtā'ī*, Foreword.

wholesome and good, and art which tends to weaken it is unhealthy and undesirable. Iqbal has no patience with people who talk of 'art for art's sake'. According to him real art must impinge dynamically on human life, and, while pleasing, it must provide guidance to human thought and energy. The aim of art must be to serve life and to make it more glorious and beautiful. The true function of all artistic effort is not merely to provide amusement or to give delight, but to awaken high sympathies in man. Just as God has created Nature, man creates art, and it is for us to decide whether man's artistic creations are not superior in design and grace to the world created by God. Pointing out the fact that the results of his creative activity show marks of superior craftsmanship, man says to God:

تو شب آفریدی چراغ آفریدم  
 سفال آفریدی ایاج آفریدم  
 بیابان و کسار و راغ آفریدی  
 خیابان و گلزار و باغ آفریدم  
 من آنم که از سنگ آئینه سازم  
 من آنم که از زهر نوشینه سازم

Thou didst create night and I made the lamp,  
 Thou didst create clay and I made the cup.  
 Thou didst create the deserts, mountains and forests,  
 I produced the orchards, gardens and groves;  
 It is I who turn stone into a mirror,  
 And it is I who turn poison into an antidote!

Art represents man's attempts to grasp the realities of life, and great artists cannot be thought to have applied themselves to their great efforts merely to add to man's entertainment by providing intellectual dolls and toys. Nothing could have spurred them on but the thought that their achievement would live to change the destiny of mankind by reinvigorating its decayed energies. But to

fulfil this noble mission art must satisfy certain conditions, which Iqbal has specified in the following lines:

نغمہ می باید جنون پروردہ آتش در خون دل حل کردہ  
 نغمہ گرم معنی ندارد مردہ است سوز اواز آتش افسردہ است  
 آن ہنرمندے کہ بر فطرت فرزد راز خود را بر نگاہ ما کشود  
 آفریند کائنات دیگرے قلب را بخشد حیات دیگرے

A melody must be nourished on madness of love,  
 It should be like fire dissolved in life-blood.  
 A melody that has no meaning is lifeless,  
 Its warmth is only from a dying fire!  
 The skilful master improves upon nature  
 And reveals his secret to our gaze!  
 He creates a new world—  
 And gives a new life to our being!

The domain of all artists is Beauty, which they see in all objects except those really ugly and ignoble. Beauty ennobles human life by creating desires which in their turn engender Love. The aim of all art is an expression of Beauty, and this it effects by idealisation. By idealisation artists raise every thought and action to a higher plane. According to Iqbal, if an artist is to fulfil his great mission his art should be subjective; his work must express his own feelings and emotions and not aim merely to produce an out-and-out representation of an object. This means that sincerity must be the keynote of all artistic expression. When sincerity attains sufficient intensity it develops into realisation, and it is this realisation which reveals the secrets of life to the artist's eye. This revelation, when given artistic expression, serves to buoy up man's spirit for the stress and struggle of existence, and this will not be possible unless art is essentially vitalising. All art, to be of any help to mankind, must be invigorating and refreshing; healthy people do not need any opiates, which eventually only tend to make life sombre by their depressing after-effects. To conclude, true art is the expression of Beauty, with a view to creating those desires in the human heart which engender Love—the



solution to all human difficulties; or to put it in terms of Iqbal's philosophy, the true function of all art is to strengthen the ego. In his words:

The ultimate end of all human activity is Life—glorious, powerful, exuberant. All human art must be subordinated to this final purpose, and the value of everything must be determined in reference to its life-yielding capacity. The highest art is that which awakens our dormant will-force and nerves us to face the trials of life manfully. All that brings drowsiness and makes us shut our eyes to Reality around, on the mastery of which alone Life depends, is a message of decay and death. There should be no opium eating in Art. The dogma of Art for the sake of Art is a clever invention of decadence to cheat us out of life and power.<sup>1</sup>

حسن خلاق بہار آرزوست جلوہ اش پروردگار آرزوست  
سینہ شاعر تجلی زار حسن خیزد از سینائے او انوار حسن  
از نگاہش خوب گردد خوب تر فطرت از افسون او محبوب تر

Beauty is the creator of desire's spring-tide;  
Desire is nourished by the display of Beauty.  
'Tis the poet's breast that Beauty unveils,  
'Tis from his Sinai that Beauty's beams arise;  
By his look the fair is made more fair;  
Through his enchantment Nature is more beloved.

With this insight into Iqbal's conception of art it will be easy to understand his poetry. The keynote of his poetic art is a desire to impress upon mankind those great truths which alone can bring about the amelioration of man. His main object is to come to the help of his readers in the struggle of life. To achieve this it is essential that he must sing of life, for as Matthew Arnold says, 'The greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life—to the question: How to live.' What tends to give weight to his utterances and charm to his art is his intellectual grasp. As A. W. Ryder has remarked:

<sup>1</sup> 'Our Prophet's Criticism of Contemporary Arabian Poetry' in *The New Era*, 1916, p. 251.

Poetical fluency is not rare; intellectual grasp is not very uncommon; but the combination has not been found perhaps more than a dozen times since the world began.<sup>1</sup>

In Iqbal we not only find the combination of poetical fluency and intellectual grasp, but find the combination effected with such exquisite harmony and grace that is not easy to find a parallel in the literatures of the world.

Iqbal's poetry has a universal appeal mainly because there is practical wisdom and a calm optimism in all his poems. His strength, like Goethe's, lies in the fact that he is not only a teacher or thinker but also, and chiefly, a prophet of humanity. One fact which we must bear in mind is that in Iqbal the two powerful impulses to artistic expression are his faith in the human capacity for limitless development and man's unique position in the universe. Both these impulses tend to make the appeal of his poetry universal. In addition to these, there is the vast range of his poetry—his subjects include: a cat in an English girl's arms, historical buildings in Cordova, a visit to Napoleon's tomb, Sicily, Shakespeare, Nietzsche, Ghālib, Goethe, Einstein, Lenin, and so on. Having sung of every conceivable subject on this sublunary planet, in *Jāvid Nāmah* he soars to other planets. This vast range needs versatility in poetic art, and Iqbal's is immense. To start with, he has left us poetry in two languages and was actually planning to write in a third when death took him away. Apart from the dramatic verse there is no kind of poetry that he did not write in Urdu and Persian. He wrote lyric, philosophic, epic, metaphysical and satiric poetry. He wrote elegies and odes. He wrote quatrains (*Rubā'iyāt*), a form especially associated with 'Omar Khayyām. In each kind of poetry his work will stand comparison with that of the world's greatest. His philosophic poetry reminds one of Rūmī, his epic poetry brings to mind that of Dante and Milton. His lyrics resemble those of Pindar, Shelley, Ronsard, Hāfiz. His elegies stand comparison with those of Tennyson and Mutanabbī. His descriptions of nature recall Wordsworth.

It is unnecessary to emphasise the difficulties which beset anyone trying to study the main tendencies in the art of such a super-craftsman. There is always the risk of creating a wrong impression

<sup>1</sup> A. W. Ryder: *Shakuntala and other poems of Kalidasa*, p. xx. J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd, London, 1912.

by laying emphasis only on certain tendencies. But it is clear that the chief characteristic of Iqbal's poetic art is a harmonious synthesis of romanticism and classicism; we see in it the fusion of romantic fervour and classical form. Again and again we find in his poems romantic matter in a classical form—self-restrained and austere, and as J. W. Robertson said, 'to understand not the antithesis of classicism and romanticism but their synthesis is the way progress lies'.<sup>1</sup> As life, according to Iqbal, has within itself possibilities of infinite development, there should be no limit to a poet's creative genius. Out of his inner depths he brings forth a world of his own and he describes this in language of rare freshness and beauty. He repeatedly refers to his own romanticism:

فروغ آدم خاکی ز تازره کاری هست  
مه و ستاره کنند آنچه پیش ازین کردند

Man's glory consists in his innovation—  
Moon and stars do what they have been doing.

He is so determined to create a new order of things that with great audacity he throws a challenge to God:

گفت یزدان که چنین ست و دگر هیچ مگو  
گفت آدم که چنین ست و چنان می بایست

God decreed, 'It is like this! Gainsay it not!'—  
Man said, 'Verily, it is like this, but it ought to be like that.'

But in romantic poetry there is always a danger that an immature artist may mistake unbridled thinking for enthusiasm. Here classicism acts as a brake, so that even in moments of the greatest creative activity the poet may not lose touch with the hard realities of life. Classicism serves to check creative activity from wandering into an unreal world of fantastic creation.

To illustrate the synthesis of romanticism and classicism we can do no better than quote from Iqbal's poem *Taskhīr-i-Fītrat*. In this poem Iqbal tells us the story of the fall of man, giving an account of the birth of Adam and Satan's disobedience. Satan's character

<sup>1</sup> J. W. Robertson: *The Genesis of Romantic Theory*, p. 29.

is highly romantic and he believes in a life of excitement and action. His chief characteristics are the love of life and a passion for action. His fall is due to the fact that his rebellious intellect makes him unfit to exercise any self-control, with the result that his whole outlook is perverted. The keynote to his character is his refusal to agree. He has neither love nor faith. His tragedy lies in the fact that he cannot change his destiny. When he is ordered by God to do obeisance to man he replies:

نوریٰ نادان نیم، سجدہ بہ آدم برم  
 او بہ نہاد است خاک، من بہ نژاد آذر م  
 می تپد از سوز من، خون رگ کائنات  
 من بہ دو صرم، من بہ غوتندرم  
 بیکر انجم ز تو، گردش انجم ز من  
 جان بہ جهان اندرم، زندگی منم  
 من ز تنک مایگان، گدیہ نکردم سجود  
 قاہر بے دوزخم، داور بے محشرم  
 تو بہ بدن جان دہی، شور بجان من دہم  
 تو بہ سکون رہزنی، من بہ تپش رہبرم  
 آدم خاکی نہاد، دون نظرو کم سواد  
 زاد در آغوش تو، پیر شود در برم

I am not foolish like the creatures of light, to bow before Adam;  
 He is but made of clay: I am fire by origin!  
 By my fire the blood courses through the veins of Creation,  
 I possess the speed of the tempest and the noise of the thunder!

Thou hast created the starry spheres: I cause them to move,  
I am the life of all in the world, the life latent in everything.  
I never begged for prostrations from men of no substance,  
I am the Terrible without a hell, and the judge without the  
day of judgement.

Thou givest life to the body: I infuse warmth into life.  
Thou showest the way to peaceful rest: I lead towards rest-  
less strife!

The man of earthly origin, foolish and short-sighted,  
Is born in Thy lap, but attaineth maturity in mine!

Penalised for his disobedience, Satan plans the fall of man by tempting Adam. He points out to Adam that the tranquil life in the Garden of Eden is insipid and lacks the warmth and fervour of passion. If Adam cares to enjoy life in the real sense he has to create passion:

زندگی سوز و ساز، بہ ز سکون دوام  
فاختہ شاہین شود، از تپش زیر دام  
ہیچ نیاید ز تو غیر سجود نیاز  
خیر چو سرو بلند، اے بعمل نرم گام  
تو نہ شناسی ہنوز شوق بیدار وصل  
حیست حیات دوام، سو حق نہ تمام

A life of ceaseless strife is better than perpetual peace;  
The dove becomes a falcon when struggling under a snare.  
Ye know naught but prostration;  
Arise like the erect cypress, O slow in action!  
Know ye not that union only means the end of desire?  
The secret of eternal life is in incomplete burning!

Adam follows Satan's advice and comes out of Eden. He discovers pleasant thrills amidst the tumults and distraction of life, and these thrills give rise to new desires in his heart. He loses his old blind faith in the value of things, and begins questioning and doubting. Iqbal changes his style when describing Adam's feelings:

چه خوش است زندگی را همه سوز و ساز کردن  
 دل کوه و دشت و صحرا به دمه گداز کردن  
 همه سوز ناتمام، همه درد آرزویم  
 بگمان و هم یقین را که شهید جستجویم

How pleasant it is to make life a continuous struggle,  
 To melt with a single breath the heart of the mountain, the forest and  
 the desert!  
 I am all an imperfect burning—all a painful longing—  
 I give away certainty for doubt as I am the victim of a ceaseless quest!

In the final scene Man appears before God and admits his sin.  
 He submits that, although he went astray, his being would have  
 lacked something important without experience of the great  
 temptation held out by Satan:

گرچه فوئش مرا برد از راه صواب  
 از غلطم در گذر عذر گنا هم پذیر  
 تا شود از آه گرم این بت سنگین گذار  
 بستن ز نار او بود مرا ناگزیر  
 عقل بدام آورد و فطرت چالاک را  
 اهر من شعله زاده سجده کند خاک را

Although his guile has led me astray from the path of rectitude,  
 Forgive my wrongs and accept my excuse for the sin.  
 To acquaint this feelingless statue with the warmth of desire,  
 It was necessary for me to be a disciple of Satan.  
 Intellect ensnares the one endowed with cunning and guile—  
 Satan born of fire makes obeisance to man of clay!

The whole poem is a masterpiece and is a fine example of the  
 synthesis of romanticism and classicism. The style changes with



the subject and there is a remarkable correspondence between the metre and rhythm and the theme. It will be noticed that in this poem Iqbal indicates beautifully the mission of man on earth. The account of Adam's advent is in itself vitalising and ennobling. It makes us realise the true position of man in the system of the universe. Till Adam's creation love had no devotee, beauty had no worshipper, mysteries were mysteries, desire and emotion had no place in the scheme of things, and life was dormant. By means of love man tried to unravel the mysteries of nature and to develop the self by warring against the unself. The goal of life comprises the fullest possible development of all latent human faculties, which is possible only when man subdues the world of matter. When he does this by fortifying the self, Satan, who refused to bow to him in Paradise, is willing to render him homage. Satan symbolises the world of the senses, perception and intellect; man can reach his goal only by subduing the world of perception. Satan is also an embodiment of the ceaseless quest, which alone can enable man to unravel all mysteries and thus attain control over the world of matter.

Again, in the trilogy known as *Lenin, Angels' Song and God's Command*, by fusing romanticism with classicism, Iqbal imparts to his art a universality of appeal. Lenin, who while alive never believed in God, suddenly finds himself face to face with the Almighty. It is no longer possible for him to deny the existence of God, but he is still bewildered and asks God: 'Tell me whose Deity Thou art? For the East the white men are the God, and for the West glittering sovereigns are the God. There is a good deal of misery in the world, and what colour one sees on human faces in the evening is due either to paints and powders or drinks. Thou art Just and All-powerful, but in Thy world the labourer has still to put up with a lot of iniquities. When is Capitalism going to end? The world is waiting impatiently for the Day of Reckoning.' This harangue, naïve and simple, draws a song in chorus from the angels. This angelic chorus is to tell the Almighty that everything is not right with His world. The Almighty is so impressed by all this that He orders the Heavenly agents to rock the foundations of the society based on iniquity, and to awaken the long-suffering poor from their pathetic contentment. Lenin addresses God thus:

اے انفس و آفاق میں پیدا ترے آیات  
 حق یہ ہے کہ ہے زندہ و پائندہ تری ذات  
 میں کیسے سمجھتا کہ تو ہے یا کہ نہیں ہے  
 ہر دم متغیر تھے خود کے نظریات  
 آج آنکھ نے دیکھا تو وہ عالم ہوا ثابت  
 میں جس کو سمجھتا تھا کلیسا کے خرافات  
 اک بات اگر مجھ کو اجازت ہو تو پوچھوں  
 مل کر نہ سکے جس کو حکیموں کے مقالات !  
 وہ کون سا آدم ہے کہ تو جس کا ہے معبود ؟  
 وہ آدم خاکی کہ جو ہے زیرِ سماوات ؟  
 مشرق کے خداوند سفیدانِ فرنگی  
 مغرب کے خداوند درخندہ فلزات !  
 یہ علم یہ حکمت یہ تدبیر یہ حکومت !  
 پیتے ہیں لہو دیتے ہیں تعلیم مساوات !  
 جہروں پہ جو سرخی نظر آتی ہے سرشام  
 یا غارہ ہے یا ساغر و مینا کی کرامات  
 تو قادر و عادل ہے مگر تیرے جہاں میں  
 ہیں تلخ بہت بندہٴ مزدور کے اوتات

کب ڈوبے گا سرمایہ پرستی کا سفینہ ؟  
دنیا ہے تری منتظر روز مکافات !

O Thou Whose signs one sees in Life and Nature,  
The fact is that Thou art Eternal and Living;  
But how could I have known that Thou didst exist?  
Every moment the views of the wise were changing.  
To-day, after seeing with my own eyes, I believe  
What I considered nothing more than an obsession of the  
Church;  
With Thy permission I desire to ask a question,  
To which the philosopher's theses could provide no answer.  
Where is the man whose God Thou art?  
Is it the man of clay who lives beneath the skies?  
For the East, gods are the whites of Europe;  
For the West, gods are the shining dollars!  
This knowledge, this learning, this statesmanship, this state-  
craft,  
They suck the blood and yet preach equality.  
The ruddy complexion that one notices on faces at eventide  
Is either due to powders or is the result of drinks.  
Thou art All Powerful and Just, but in Thy world  
The lot of the hapless labourer is very hard!  
When will this boat of Capitalism be wrecked?  
Thy world is waiting for the Day of Reckoning!

This plain statement of facts by Lenin moves angels to sing in  
chorus:

عقل ہے بے زمام ابھی عشق ہے بے مقام ابھی  
نقش گر ازل ترا نقش ہے ناتمام ابھی  
خلق خدا کی گھات میں رند و فقیہ و میر و پیر  
تیرے جہاں میں ہے وہی گردش صبح و سام ابھی

Intellect is still unbridled, Love is not localised;  
O Painter Divine, Thy painting is still lacking in something.  
Lying in ambush for mankind are the libertine, the theologian,  
the leader and the monk;  
In Thy Universe the old order still continueth!

This chorus moves the Almighty and He orders the angels to burn every ear of corn in the field which is not used for providing sustenance for the cultivator who tends it:

اٹھو میری دنیا کے غریبوں کو جگا دو  
 کاخ اُمراء کے درو دیوار ہلا دو  
 مگرماؤ غلاموں کا لہو سوز یقین سے  
 کنجشک فرومایہ کو شاہیں سے لڑا دو  
 جس کھیت سے دھقاں کو میسر نہیں روزی  
 اس کھیت کے ہر خوشہ گندم کو جلا دو  
 تہذیب نوی کارگہہ شیشہ گراں ہے  
 آداب جنوں شاعر مشرق کو سکھا دو

Arise and awake the poor of My world,  
 Shake up the very foundations of the palaces of the rich!  
 Warm the blood of slaves with the fire of faith—  
 Give the humble sparrow strength to fight the falcon!  
 Burn every ear of corn in the field,  
 Which is not used as food for the cultivator.  
 Modern civilisation is but a glass-blower's workshop—  
 Impart frenzy to the Poet of the East (so that he may smash it).

The style of the poem is classical but the subject is romantic. Lenin's address is in the language of a perplexed soul looking for something and eager to learn; his character is entirely romantic. The rhythm and metre of the angel's chorus brings to our minds the glory of celestial music, while God's command is in solemn organ-like tones in keeping with the majesty and dignity of the Almighty.

Another romantic poem to which reference should be made here is *Hudī* (*The Arab Cameleer's Melody*). In nuance, in subtle and exquisite cadences of music and rhythm it would be difficult to find a poem to match this. It is well known that a Bedouin's camel

constitutes his all; it is his sole companion in the vast expanse of tropical deserts and his sole possession in the journey of life. These considerations generate a passionate attachment between the two. In describing this attachment the poet has used forms of expression which are highly suggestive. As the driver's song helps him to forget his troubles and steels his comrade for the long and tiring journey, so the poet's song will serve to infuse new courage into the drooping spirits of his people:

ناتہ' سیار من  
 آہوئے تاتار من  
 درہم و دینار من  
 اندک و بسار من  
 دولت بیدار من  
 تیز ترک گامزن منزل ما دور نیست  
 دلکش و زیباستی  
 شاہد رعناستی  
 روکش و راستی  
 غیرت لیلاستی  
 دختر صحراستی  
 تیز ترک گامزن منزل ما دور نیست

O my fleet-footed dromedary!  
 My gazelle of Tartary!  
 O my *dirham* and my *dinar*!  
 O my all-in-all!  
 My rising fortune!  
 Step forth a little faster, our destination is not far!

Thou art charming and gracefull  
 Thou art a proud beauty!  
 Thou art the rival of the *hourî*!  
 Thou art the envy of Laila!  
 Thou art a daughter of the desert!

Step forth a little faster, our destination is not far!

The camel's journey is symbolic of man's life. All the encomiums used by the cameleer for his steed apply with equal emphasis to man—the vicegerent of God on earth. And by making the cameleer remind the camel repeatedly that the goal is not far, the poet infuses courage into man so that he may not grumble at the pains which accompany his arduous evolution. There is so much beauty, true imagination and power of language, especially of epithet, in these verses that reciting them one feels elated! The poet's vocabulary is so vast that, whatever simile he uses, he never fails to light on the most felicitous expression. The passionate eloquence provides an index to the spontaneity of his genius.

In *Sarūd-i-Anjum* (*The Symphony of the Stars*) the poet describes how stars moving in the vastness of the firmament indulge in a symphony, which shows that, in spite of their satisfaction with life, they are still looking for a new world. It is a highly suggestive poem touching upon various subjects—historical, astronomical and artistic, with rare charm. While stars go revolving and discovering new spheres, man unconscious of his great destiny is absorbed in the petty affairs of this planet and forgets his noble mission. What could not man achieve if he would only make up his mind to shake off this attitude of contentment with things as they are!

ہستیٰ ما نظام ما . مستیٰ ما خرام ما  
 گردش بے مقام ما زندگی دوام ما  
 دور فلک بکام ما می نگریم و می رویم  
 بیش تو نزدما کھے سال تو پیش ما دے  
 اے بکنار تو یہے ساختہ بہ نشینے  
 ما بتلاش عالمے می نگریم و می رویم



Our system, our very life,  
 Our ecstasy, but a rhythm;  
 Our aimless meandering,  
 The life eternal for us;  
 Time's wheel subserves our purpose.  
 We watch and move on!

Your bulk is but an atom,  
 Your year but a moment to us.  
 Reclining in the lap of the ocean,  
 You are content with a dew drop.  
 We seek the world entire.  
 We watch and move on!

There is another romantic poem to which reference should be made here—*The Hourî and the Poet*. A poet in his wanderings strays into Heaven. He is still so absorbed in the world of his own thoughts that the thousand-and-one charms of that place fail to attract him. So in despair the *hourî* gets hold of him and addresses him thus:

'You are a strange fellow. You do not seem to have any craving for these life-giving drinks, nor any use for my looks. You do not seem to appreciate what friendship and companionship are. All that you seem to be interested in is the creation of an imaginary world of your own.' The poet turns and replies in a way which shows his boredom:

'I do not care for the place as it is too quiet for me. The tranquillity of the place is awful. The moment I see a pretty face I begin longing for a prettier. This does not give me any peace of mind. The residents of this blissful spot have never experienced any want or grief, and so they are incapable of sympathising with any one.' The *hourî* addresses the poet thus:

نه به بادہ میل داری نہ بمن نظر کشائی  
 عجب این کہ تو نہ دانی رہ درسم آشنائی

You neither care for wine nor look at me  
 'Tis a wonder you know not the art of love-making.

The poet replies:

ہم کہم کہ فطرت من بہ مقام درنسا زد  
 دل نامصبور دارم چو صبا بہ لالہ زارے  
 چو نظر قرار گیرد بہ نگار خوبروئی  
 تپید آن زمان دل من بئی خوبتر نگارے  
 ز شرر ستارہ جویم ز ستارہ آفتابے  
 سر منزلی ندارم کہ بمرم از قرارے  
 دل عاشقان بمر د بہ بشت جاودانے  
 نہ نوای درد مندے نہ غمے نہ غمگسارے

What am I to do? My temper does not get reconciled  
 to one place,  
 I have a restless heart like the breeze in a poppy field!  
 When my vision is arrested by a beloved's beauty,  
 My heart begins yearning for a more beautiful face!  
 I seek a star from the spark and a sun from the star,  
 I do not think of destination, as rest means my death!  
 A lover's heart loses all zest in eternal Paradise—  
 There is no song of the forlorn, no grief and no  
 sympathiser in this place!

The poem is a piece of art in which the poet has displayed artistic presentation, grace of style and the power of originality. The *hourî* symbolises the peace and tranquillity in man's life. This tranquillity can be attained by loss of feeling, but then life will lack something important. Feeling and perceptions must be there to make life worth living.

The value and significance of symbols was exalted by Urdu and Persian poets even before the symbolist movement became popular in Europe, but it was left to Iqbal to give to symbolism in these languages new directions and a new intensity, and it can be said that symbolism is a prominent feature of Iqbal's art.

Bowra describes poetic symbolism as 'in origin a mystical kind of poetry whose technique depended on its metaphysics, and whose popularity was due to the importance that it gave to the poet's self and to the element of music in his art'. These criteria would imply a rich symbolism in Iqbal's writings, and no student of his would be disappointed in this respect. Like Dante, Iqbal also tried to create with the help of his symbols a visible image of an invisible world. He also tried to capture in his verse the ideal beauty. His symbols do not inform, but suggest and evoke; they do not name things, but create their atmosphere. The charm and appeal of his symbols lies mainly in the fact that they differ fundamentally from those used by other poets in Urdu and Persian. To give a few examples, Abraham and Nimrod, Moses and Pharaoh, Hussain and Yazid, only signified tragic episodes of religious persecution in the history of mankind, but for Iqbal they refer to the eternal struggle between good and evil; Farhad and Parwez signified rivalry in love, but for Iqbal they represent love and intellect; Mahmud and Ayaz signified a despotic King and his favourite slave, but for Iqbal they stand for capital and labour, and so on. He describes stars as 'harvest gatherers in the night's farm'. Iqbal's symbolism brought such a concentrated richness to Urdu and Persian verse as they had never known before.

A notable feature of Iqbal's poetry is his mysticism, a detailed reference to which will be made later on. Some interesting articles have appeared on Iqbal's mysticism, but the subject has not yet received the attention which it deserves. As a matter of fact, in view of the vigorous way in which Iqbal attacked the spirit of self-renunciation and self-annihilation preached by certain Sūfīs, and considering Iqbal's philosophy of action, some readers may be surprised by the mention of mysticism in Iqbal's poetry. That in spite of his attacks on certain tenets of popular Sūfism, especially pantheistic tendencies, Iqbal was essentially a Sūfī will be apparent from the following remarks of Professor A. J. Arberry of Cambridge University:

In this connection it may be added that by no means the least important personality in Sūfī history was the late Sir Muḥammad Iqbal, whose significance R. A. Nicholson was among the first to recognise: it is deplorable that this great Islamic figure,

whose intellectual and spiritual gifts made of him one of the leading thinkers of our times, should still not have found biographers able to do him full justice. Iqbal belongs by right to the history of Sūfism, to which he made both scientific and practical contributions, and I therefore need make no apology for mentioning his name in this context.<sup>1</sup>

It is not possible to deal with Iqbal's mysticism adequately here; it needs a volume to itself, but the following lines are quoted just to illustrate his mysticism.

تیری خدائی سے ہے میرے جنوں کو گلہ  
اپنے لئے لامکاں میرے لئے چار سو  
فلسفہ اور شعر کی اور حقیقت ہے کیا  
حرف منا جسے کہہ نہ سکیں روبرو

My madness has a grievance against Thy Divinity;  
Thou hast for Thee the spaceless and for me the four-  
dimensioned space.  
What is philosophy and what is poetry after all?  
Words of yearning which can't be expressed in Thy presence.

خرد مندوں سے کیا پوچھوں کہ میری ابتدا کیا ہے  
کہ میں اس فکر میں رہتا ہوں میری انتہا کیا ہے  
خودی کو کر بلند اتنا کہ ہر تقدیر سے پہلے  
خدا بندے سے خود پوچھے بتا تیری رضا کیا ہے

Why should I ask the wise about my origin?  
I am always wanting to know about my goal.  
Develop thy self so that before every decree  
God will ask thee: 'What is thy wish?'

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Arberry: *An Introduction to the History of Sūfism*, p. 67. Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1942.

تو ہے محیط بیکران میں ہوں ذرا سی آبِ جو  
یا مجھے ہمکنار کر یا مجھے بے کنار کر  
باغِ بہشت سے مجھے حکم سفر دیا تھا کیوں  
کارِ جہاں دراز ہے اب مرا انتظار کر

Thou art the limitless ocean and I am but a tiny rivulet,  
Either make me Thy peer or turn me limitless at least.  
Why didst Thou order me to quit the Garden of Eden?  
Now there's much to be done here, so just wait for me!

Having dealt with the basic tendencies of Iqbal's poetic art, we can now examine some of the main characteristics of his compositions.

(1) *His Imagination*. We may not all agree with Shelley when he says, 'Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be the expression of the imagination', but it must be admitted that imagination is a special endowment of poets. A poet's imagination on the one hand expresses intellectual and spiritual conception in appropriate form, and on the other fills with a higher meaning what he sees. Thus all poets must have imagination; and the difference between various poets is only a matter of degree. As an artist Iqbal was endowed with supreme imaginative powers—associative as well as interpretative. For associative imagination one has to refer to his poem *Tanhā'ī*. Poets in all languages have written on loneliness, but Iqbal's treatment is full of such pathos that it cannot fail to strike a sensitive chord in any reader:

بہ بحرِ رقتم و گفتم بہ موج بیتا ہے  
ہمیشہ در طلبِ استی بہ مشکلی داری؟  
ہزار لو لوئے لا لاسبت در گریبان  
درون سینہ چو من گو ہر دلی داری؟

تپید و از لب ساحل رسید و هیچ نگفت  
 تدم بحضرت یزدان گذشتم از مهر و مهر  
 که در جهان تو یک ذره آشنایم نیست  
 جهان تنی ز دل و مشت خاک من همه دل  
 چمن خوش است و لے درخور نوایم نیست  
 تبسمے بہ لب او رسید و هیچ نگفت

To the seashore I went and said to a restless wave,  
 'Thou art always in quest of something. What ails thee?  
 There are a thousand bright pearls in thy bosom,  
 But hast thou a heart like mine in thy breast?'  
 It merely trembled, sped away from the shore, and said nothing!  
 I betook myself to the presence of God, passing beyond the sun  
 and the moon, and said:  
 'In Thy world not a single particle knows me,  
 The world has no heart and this earthly being of mine is all heart  
 The garden is charming, but is not worthy of my song.'  
 A smile came to His lips but He said nothing!

This is a great poem. Every image that the poet's imagination associates with loneliness heightens its effect. And various images serve to heighten the central emotional effect. The harmony of the images is ensured by the fact that they all spring from the same feeling in the poet.

But it is in his interpretative imagination that Iqbal excels. The interpretative imagination perceives spiritual value or significance, and renders objects by presenting qualities in which the spiritual value resides. For example in the poem on *Shabnam* (Dew) he says:

در پیرهن شاہد گل سوزن خارا است  
 خارا است، ولیکن زندیمان نگارا است



از عشق نزار است  
در پہلوئی یار است  
این ہم ز بہار است

In the garment of the sweet flower is the needle of the thorn.  
Though 'tis a thorn, 'tis an associate of the beloved.

'Tis after all a frenzied lover,  
And is in close association with the beloved,  
And it also owes its existence to the spring.

By presenting the qualities of a thorn, which generally do not strike an ordinary observer, the poet inculcates upon man the courage with which he must face the difficulties, disappointments and setbacks of life. After all, life would be incomplete without these, so it is no use grumbling about them.

The relation between imagination and emotion is a close one, so much so that a deep emotion kindles imagination and imaginative insight kindles emotion. It follows then that a high degree of imagination generally implies a corresponding development of the emotions. Iqbal's supreme imaginative power ensures that his emotions are deep, but sane and well-controlled. It is this quality which saves Iqbal from flabby sentiments, so common among a majority of Urdu poets, whose emotional nature tends to run into fancy.

(2) *His treatment of Nature.* Iqbal has left a large number of poems describing natural scenes which remind one of Wordsworth's poetry, and an important feature of Iqbal's poetic art is his extensive love of nature. By what Ruskin calls the 'pathetic fallacy', he imagines all natural objects living lives like ours. His treatment of Nature is in the main subjective, and he transfers his own mental and emotional states to the objects he describes:

صدمہ آجائے ہوا سے گل کی بتی کو اگر  
اشک بن کر میری آنکھوں سے ٹپک جائے اثر

If the petal of a flower suffers a shock from the breeze,  
It so affects me that a tear gushes out of my eye!

Nature is always steeped in his personal feeling. For example, when describing the advent of spring, he says:

خیز که در کوه و دشت، خیمه زد ابر بهار  
 مست ترنم هزار  
 طوطی و دراج و سار  
 بر طرف جو بهار  
 کشت گل و لاله زار  
 چشم تماشا بیار  
 خیز که در کوه و دشت، خیمه زد ابر بهار

Arise! for on hills and dales  
 The spring has arrived!  
 Mad in singing are nightingales,  
 Cuckoos, partridges, and quails;  
 Along the banks of the brook  
 Have sprung roses and the poppy.  
 Come out and see.  
 Arise! for on hills and dales  
 The spring has arrived!

The description of the spring is not only enchanting, it also epitomises Iqbal's message: 'Awake, arise, and get busy. It is no time to lie dormant.' The effect of the spring is to bestow life and vitality upon everything, and as we go through the poem we feel our very being pulsating with life.

Apart from this subjective treatment, Iqbal uses Nature for the metaphors, similes and illustrations which he employs with wonderful effect. He also uses Nature as a background to his poetry. Nature is brought to sustain, by sympathy, the inner significance of the message of the poem. Often Nature is described in such a way as to prepare the ground for the message the poet wants to convey. For example, in *Sāqi Nāmāh* Iqbal says:

فضائی بیلی نیلی ہوا میں سرور    ٹہرتے نہیں آشیاں میں طیور  
 وہ جوئے کستاں اچکتی ہوئی    اٹکتی لچکتی سرکتی ہوئی  
 اچھلتی پھسلتی سنبھلتی ہوئی    بڑے بیچ کھا کر نکلتی ہوئی  
 ذرا دیکھ اے ساقی لالہ فام    سناتی ہے یہ زندگی کا پیام

The azure sky overhead, the air charged with joy!  
 Even the birds will not stay in their nests!  
 And behold yonder the mountain stream leaping,  
 Conquering obstructions, swaying and crawling;  
 See it jumping over or slipping by obstacles and then  
 eddying on,  
 Rushing forth in spite of many a curve and twist!  
 Just behold, O *Sāqi*, bright-faced!  
 How the stream conveys the message of life!

Against a background of Nature as a whole the poet conveys his philosophy of life in the allegory of a mountain stream. Just as the stream advances steadily in spite of all obstructions, so man must develop his personality by surmounting in his way.

In his description of Kashmir Iqbal says:

رخت بہ کاشمیر کشا، کوہ و تل و دمن نگر  
 سبزہ جہان جہان بین، لالہ چمن چمن نگر  
 باد بہار موج موج، مرغ بہار فوج فوج  
 صلصل و سار زوج زوج، بر سر نارون نگر  
 لالہ ز خاک بر دمید، موج با بخو تپید  
 خاک شرر شرر بین، آب شکن شکن نگر  
 دختر گے بر جھنے، لالہ رنے، سمن برے  
 چشم بروی او کشا باز بخو یستن نگر

Alight in Kashmir and behold the mountains, the hills and the  
dales;  
Behold the green grass all over and gardens full of poppies.  
Feel the spring breeze in wave after wave; see birds in myriads,  
The wood pigeons and the starlings in pairs on the poplars.  
The poppies have sprouted from the dust; ripples play on the  
stream surface;  
Behold the dust full of sparks and water wrinkled by ripples!  
See the young Brahmin girl, pink-cheeked and silver-bosomed;  
Feast thine eyes on her beautiful face and then look at thyself!

Note how beautifully the poet has utilised the spiritual significance of Nature in taking his readers' thoughts from the beautiful scene in Kashmir to his own self. He seems to ask: 'Cannot man, the vicegerent of God on earth, attain all the majesty, vastness and freedom of Nature by developing himself?' The contemplation of Nature is made by the poet a revealing agency, showing us the vast possibilities of man's development. This method of treating nature corresponds to some extent to that adopted by Tennyson in his *Idylls of the King*.

Apart from the subjective treatment of Nature Iqbal also excels in describing natural scenes. This descriptive poetry is common in his earlier compositions, painting pictures in which he seems to take delight in using the richest colours. By idealisation he makes us see beauty which we would have passed by without noticing. Describing a pastoral scene, he writes:

صف باندھے دونوں جانب بوئے ہرے ہرے ہوں  
ندی کا صاف پانی تصویر لے رہا ہو  
ہو دلفریب ایسا کہسار کا نظارہ  
پانی بھی موج بن کر اٹھ اٹھ کے دیکھتا ہو  
پانی کو چھو رہی ہو جھک جھک کے گل کی ٹہنی  
جیسے حسین کوئی آئینہ دیکھتا ہو

پھولوں کو آئے جس دم شبہم وضو کرانے  
رونا میرا وضو ہو، نہالہ مری دعا ہو

Arrayed along both sides are trees,  
The clear water of the river reflecting the scene;  
So charming is the view of hilly country  
That water is rising in ripples to see it!  
The flowery boughs stoop towards the water  
Like a beautiful damsel looking into a mirror.  
When dew falls for flowers to perform ablutions,  
My ablutions will be performed with tears and prayers  
with wailing !

Such poetry is generally objective, but in Iqbal even these descriptions are tinged with subjectivism.

The main characteristic of these descriptive poems is that Iqbal makes us feel that we are in the very midst of the scene that he is depicting. The effect produced is in keeping with the spirit of the description. In his poem *Ek Shām* (*An Evening*) Iqbal has depicted the calm of eventide on the banks of the Neckar in Heidelberg: all Nature is quiet and calm as if absorbed in a deep reverie; the moonlight, the branches of trees, birds and stars are all still and quiet. The poet emphasises the prevailing calm by saying that the magic of tranquillity has even turned the tempestuous motion of the river into restful gliding. When reading the poem we feel as if the spirit of tranquillity is enveloping us and we are being lulled to sleep.

خاموش ہے چاندنی قمر کی شاخیں ہیں خاموش ہر شجر کی  
فطرت بے ہوش ہو گئی ہے آغوش میں شب کے سو گئی ہے

Light from the moon is tranquil,  
Branches of every tree are still,  
Nature has become unconscious,  
Slumbering in the lap of night.

It is not possible here to deal exhaustively with Iqbal's treatment of Nature, but reference must be made to accuracy of detail. For example, this description of the approach of Autumn:

بتیاں پھولوں کی گرتی ہیں غزاں میں اس طرح  
وست طفل خفته سے رنگیں کھلونے جس طرح

The petals of a flower fall in Autumn  
As coloured toys from the hand of a sleeping child.

(3) *The sense of 'newness' in his poetry.* Remarkable in Iqbal's poetry is the sense of 'newness', and the main reason for this is that, although he was not actually anti-traditionalist, he uses certain words and combinations of words to express his visions which are entirely original. Some of these words are coined by him; others represent old words used in an entirely new sense. In this respect he bears a close resemblance to the English poet Keats.

By his wonderful felicity of phrasing language acquires meanings beyond those formally assigned by the lexicographer. These words and phrases act as the keystone for the entire arch of the poetic inspiration. As the removal of the keystone is sure to cause the downfall of an entire arch, so if we try to substitute something else for the master word or phrase, the whole artistic expression is marred. Proper expression of the poetic experience depends solely upon words and phrases which constitute the very soul of the conception. For example, in the line given below the word, '*qalandarāna*' forms the pivot round which the charm of the poem hinges.

زبرون درگذشتم، ز درون خانه گفتم  
سخن نگفته را، به قلندرانه گفتم

I passed by the door outside, but I related all that happened inside,  
How *qalandar*-like did I say what had never been said before!

To Iqbal '*qalandar*' symbolises a man who defies conventions and formalities. Iqbal further idealises this Bohemian into a seer who can know the secrets of a house without going in. His utterances are bound to be weighty and important, and this is the idea of the verse. But the word '*qalandarāna*' infuses a new charm and makes the verse a living reality.

Such words and phrases excite our imagination and go straight



home to the heart, a power that can be achieved only by those artists who are also scholars, or by scholars who are also great artists. All these words and phrases contribute to the sense of newness we have mentioned. The Persian language was better provided with words and phrases for the expression of his thoughts, and this is said to be one of the reasons why he started writing in Persian. But even Persian is richer to-day, so far as new phrases and expressions are concerned, because Iqbal chose it as the vehicle for his thoughts.

Apart from the newness rare to Urdu and Persian poets, one should mention his quality of surprise, characteristic of all great poetry.

(4) *Stanza-forms*. The types of stanza used in Urdu and Persian poetry are generally standardised, but Iqbal in his quest for more variety in the harmonies of versification adopted several new stanza-forms. Thus a poem is sometimes built up of strictly identical sections, producing remarkable effects of melody. For example, his poem in *Zabūr* with the refrain 'Arise from deep slumber' consists of stanzas with six lines each. The first four rhyme together and have the same metre. The fifth line has a longer metre and the sixth has a shorter one. Both the fifth and the sixth lines rhyme with the first four lines and are repeated in each stanza. In the poem *Sarūd-i-Anjum* (*The Symphony of the Stars*) every stanza consists of five lines—the first four rhyme and are in the same metre, but the fifth line is in a different metre and does not rhyme with the other lines. It is repeated at the end of each stanza. In the poem *Inqilāb* (*Revolution*) a stanza consists of four lines. In the first stanza all the four lines rhyme, but in the remaining stanzas only the last three lines rhyme. The metre of the first two lines is the same, and the third and fourth lines are repeated at the end of each stanza.

The subject cannot be fully dealt with here, and this brief reference is made mainly to draw attention to an important characteristic of Iqbal's poetic art. The æsthetic qualities of the different stanza-forms adopted by Iqbal and their applicability to different purposes need detailed investigation. For instance in the poem *The Symphony of the Stars* the rhythm is flowing, showing the calm but quick movements of the stars, but in the poem on *Revolution*, the rhythm is delayed and the cadences lingering and soft, depicting the gradual arrival of revolution.

(5) *Eloquence*. The most remarkable characteristic of Iqbal's poetry is his passionate eloquence. Time after time, apparently without effort, he reaches some lofty peak, and the onrush of melodious language is amazing. Whatever subject he touches, there is such a flow of ideas clothed in beautiful language that one finds it difficult to know whether it is the thought itself or the happiness of its expression which is the source of gratification. Apart from the great value of his thought, Iqbal's poetry is notable for well-chosen words and vivid imagery; he has succeeded remarkably in giving his philosophy a poetical rendering. The intensity of his vision contributes to his singular eloquence, and in every line he has written there is abundant music, rich and exquisite. Even in his *mathnawīs* this eloquence is wonderfully maintained without any loss of flow or harmony. It is reported by some of his friends that when Iqbal used to be in a mood for composition the flow of verses seemed incessant. Striking tribute to all the spontaneity of his poetic genius!

In all he wrote there is this marvellous eloquence. The glow of inspiration never wanes.

## 6

### *Lyric Poetry*

تو جوان خام سوزے سخن تمام سوزے  
غزلے کہ می سرایم. بتو سازگار بادا

Thou art immature and my verses are all fire,  
I hope the lyric I am chanting will agree with thee.

LYRIC POETRY is poetry in its highest, intensest and purest form, singing of emotions which constitute very life—of love, fear, joy, anger, hope and devotion. Its appeal is universal. There is no human breast which does not beat with joy over success in life, or become depressed by failures, and we all like to have our experiences portrayed by artists and sung by poets in beautiful and musical language. In its magical cadences lyric poetry possesses a haunting loveliness which seems to remove us from the sordid surroundings of this earthly existence and to lift us to a higher plane. Other kinds of poetry may be more difficult to produce, and may represent a combination of more niceties of poetic art, but no other poetry contains so much of the true 'poetic ore'.

The earliest lyric required the accompaniment of the harp, and lyric poetry has retained in varying degrees the qualities of song. True, many lyrics cannot be set to music, but they all have a verbal melody. European languages soon developed several types of poetry, which, although differing from the true lyric in several important respects, shared in greater or lesser degree the chief characteristics of the true lyric—melody and spontaneity. These were termed sonnets, odes, elegies, and so on, and are now all included in lyric poetry. It became a generally accepted principle in all European literatures that all poetry characterised by subjective feeling and unity of theme could be regarded as lyric poetry. Judged by this standard, the *ghazals* of Urdu and Persian

literature represent lyric poetry, but many do not possess unity of theme, because the poet does not confine himself to one emotion. Iqbal refers to this lack of unity:

The butterfly imagination of the Persian flies, half inebriated as it were, from flower to flower and seems to be incapable of reviewing the garden as a whole. For this reason his deepest thoughts and emotions find expression in disconnected verses (*ghazal*) which reveal all the subtlety of his artistic soul.<sup>1</sup>

Shiblī Nu'mānī, the great Oriental Scholar and critic of Persian poetry, considers it a great achievement on the part of a poet to be able to deal with an emotion in a single verse.<sup>2</sup> While much can be said for this point of view, it is irrefutable that lack of unity robs the *ghazal* of much of its effect, and the *ghazal* as such does not fully echo human emotions and sentiments. The echo may be there but it is in a disjointed condition, and is, even in the best of *ghazals*, incomplete. Still, the great charm and attraction of the *ghazal* in Urdu and Persian poetry cannot be denied, and so the following remarks of a great critic will be found interesting:

A word, a phrase, at most a hemistich may form a poem. Such were the unfulfilled wishes of some of our contemporary French symbolists. They could not evolve a type-form which would sustain fragmentary spasms of inspiration, mould waves of consciousness into a stream. The genius of their language was unaware of the *ghazal*—the most popular verse-form in Persian and Urdu literatures. The *ghazal* is a mono-rhyme pattern in which every line ending in a common rhyme is a complete unit. The link between the lines is essentially of sound and not of sense. Each line represents singleness amongst a welter of impressions. It focusses attention on the shortest span of æsthetic experience. Hence its intensity. This intensity is accompanied by the novelty of ideas changing from line to line. . . . But though the ideas and rhymes change, the main sound pattern is repetitive. These three factors of intensity, novelty and repetition, which even in primers of psychology are mentioned as the basic 'rule of attention' (qualities by which a phenomenon

<sup>1</sup> *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, p. viii. Luzac and Co., London, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> *Shā'ir-al-'Ajām*, Vol. II, p. 296 (First edition). Privately published 1910.

gains attention), make the *ghazal* the most memorable verse form. As in form, so in content, it depicts kaleidoscopically the jumpiness of experience.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from a classification according to content, Urdu and Persian poetry has a classification based on form. To start with, there are two-rhymed and one-rhymed verses. Of the one-rhymed forms, *ghazals* and *qasidas* are the most important. The *ghazal* differs from the *qasida* mainly with regard to subject and length. Both these forms are variously described by English writers. Some have applied the term 'ode' to both alike, others have made a distinction and have called *ghazals* lyrics and *qasidas* odes. Both forms generally possess lyrical freshness and verbal music, but a *qasida* not always. There is a third form of poetry known as *qit'a*, which actually means 'a fragment', and is so called because originally it represented a detached fragment of a *qasida*. But in many cases *qit'as* are intended to be independent poems.

Most *ghazals*, whether possessing unity of theme or not, can be put to music and are essentially lyric; several *qasidas* and *qit'as* can also be essentially lyrical. Thus lyric poetry in Urdu and Persian may comprise *ghazals*, *qasidas* and *qit'as*. But the truly lyrical poetry in Urdu and Persian consists of a special type of *ghazal*, known as the *ghazal-i-musalsal*. This is really a *ghazal* which possesses unity of theme. Sa'di was the first great poet in Persian to try his hand at this form, and many later poets have also composed them. Khusrau, one of the greatest Persian poets born in Hindustan, excelled in writing *ghazal-i-musalsal*. Although Iqbal wrote lyric poetry in all the forms mentioned, he also excels in *ghazal-i-musalsal*. Whatever form he adopts—and it must be admitted that the classification by form is purely artificial—Iqbal has left lyric poetry which can stand comparison with the finest in the world. Professor R. A. Nicholson writes, 'His poetry often reminds us of Shelley', which gives us a measure of Iqbal's lyrics. It will be interesting to investigate what led to his greatness as a lyric poet, what in fact goes to make him one of the greatest.

The causes are not far to seek. The first is the subjective nature of Iqbal's poetic art. It is an eminently suitable style for songs which treat of his own moments of bliss. They abound with sen-

<sup>1</sup> Dr M. D. Taseer in 'Iqbal and the *Ghazal*', *Pakistan Quarterly*, Vol. IV, No. 1.



timents and emotions common to everyone. It is in this that the secret of his great charm and appeal chiefly lies. His lyric poetry is the consummate expression either of some supreme moment in his life or of some rapturous mood, and it recalls to his readers similar experiences in their own lives. All great lyric poetry must be essentially subjective, and it must incorporate the vivid expression of personal experience. Browning wrote: 'The subjective poet, whose study has been himself, appealing through himself to the absolute Divine mind prefers to dwell upon those external scenic appearances which strike out most abundantly and uninterruptedly his inner light and power, selects that silence of the earth and sea in which he can best hear the beating of his individual heart, and leaves the noisy, complex, yet imperfect exhibitions of nature in the manifold experience of man around him, which serves only to distract and suppress the working of his brain.'<sup>1</sup> Iqbal, who believed that all art must be subjective, was well fitted to describe his own experiences, the joy of his imagination in its own vision.

Secondly, Iqbal sings essentially of life. This gives to his poems the essential unity of theme. He weaves into his poetry those thrills of desire, those spurts of emotion which arrest our imagination and fire with passion our simple experiences of life. It is all done with such vivid and moving imagery that it cannot fail to strike a sympathetic response. In his songs even the highly abstruse notions of philosophy and religion are set free from their academic isolation and become a part of the common life of men. In this he ranks with supreme craftsmen like Hāfiz and Ghālib.

But above all his greatness lies in his philosophy of life. By advocating a life of ceaseless striving, and discountenancing all those views of life which advocate renunciation and self-annihilation, Iqbal widened the scope of lyric poetry. If man does not don the ascetic's sackcloth, but lives an active life along with his fellow-men, there are many more occasions for the play of his emotions—joy at success, grief over disappointments, exultation in effort. Real life is nothing but a progressive succession of fresh ends, fresh purposes and values. This in itself ensures an unending succession of those thrills, those rapturous glows of feeling which provide the very substance of the finest lyric poetry. Iqbal's philosophy of life envisages a glorious destiny for mankind. He

<sup>1</sup> Browning's Preface to Shelley's letters. Quoted by Ernest Rhys in *Browning and His Poetry*, p. 62, George G. Harrap and Co., London, 1928.



glimpses this destiny, and expresses his joy in the vision in rich harmonious language. It has often been remarked that the joy of imagination in its own vision is one of the most exquisite moods man ever experiences. In addition to this, Iqbal has intense faith that his poetry will enable mankind to reach the great goal of his glorious vision. This faith is reflected in his passionate verse. This is the real secret of the flowing spontaneity of all his lyrics. He sings because he cannot help singing; his heart is full and cannot otherwise be relieved.

Thus it will be seen that owing to the emotional basis of his temperament, his outlook on life, and his views on poetic art, a poet like Iqbal had all the qualifications of a great lyricist. But really great lyric poetry needs something more than emotions and views on life. It has been said that a lyric poem is the adequate and consummate expression of some supreme moment or rapture in the poet's life. The inspiring mood must be single, and the language which is chosen to express this mood or moment must be so chosen as to have perfect rhythm and melody. The outward melody of the language used by the poet must reflect the already rhythmical and musical flow of feelings surging up within him. Thus two things are essential for a perfect lyric—original emotion of great intensity and depth, and corresponding mastery over language to give it fitting utterance. Iqbal always had a keen ear for melody and harmony, and he instinctively selected those words and metres which served to enhance the rhythm of his language.

Here are two illustrations:

فصل بہار این چنین ، بانگ ہزار این چنین  
چہرہ کشا ، غزل سرا ، بادہ بیار این چنین  
باد بسار را بگو ، پے بجیال من برو  
وادی و دشت را دہد ، نقش و نگار این چنین  
دل بکے نباختہ ، بادو جہان نساختہ  
من بخور تو رسم ، روز شمار این چنین

Spring like this! Such notes of the nightingale!  
 Unveil thy face, sing a song, and hand round the wine thus!  
 Bid the spring breeze follow my fancy  
 Which bedecks with blooms valley and plain thus!  
 My heart devoted to none, not satisfied with both the worlds,  
 On the Day of Reckoning I shall reach Thy presence thus!

حلقہ بستند سر تربت من نوہ گران  
 دبران، زہرہ و شان، گلبدنان، سیم بران  
 حرد افروود مرا درس حکیمان فرنگ  
 سینہ افروخت مرا صحبت صاحب نظران  
 اے کہ در مدرسہ جوئی ادب و دانش و ذوق  
 نخرد بادہ کس از کارگہ شیشہ گران

Arrayed round my grave were in mourning  
 Sweethearts, Venus-like, rose-bodied and silver-bosomed!  
 The teaching of the Western sages added to my knowledge,  
 Association with the Eastern seers has imparted a fervent glow  
 to my heart.  
 O ye who seek for culture, wit and fervour in a seminary,  
 Know ye not the futility of seeking wine in a glass-blower's  
 workshop?

It has been urged by people who have not read Iqbal that as his poems treat of his philosophy of action and struggle, they are bound to lack the real poetical fervour. Iqbal no doubt possessed a large fund of thought to draw upon and had a powerful intellect which sought to pierce the very core of men and things, and so it was inevitable that he should sing in his poems of subjects with which his intellect grappled. But keen and powerful as his intellect was, none knew so well as Iqbal that in song-writing intellect must be wholly subordinated to feeling. Thus he managed to introduce and propagate his philosophy of action and self development through rhymes and metres inherited from Hāfiz, Nazīrī, and Meer. It is the equipoise of thought and emotion, the strong sense latent in and pervading the melody that places

Iqbal's *ghazals* among the finest the world has known. They not only reveal a perfect union of soul and form, but show that, while Iqbal retained the old instrument in his hands, the old soft melodies faded and the same chords began to resound with quite different notes, inspiring struggle and stress. As an illustration I quote the following *ghazal*:

ہر چیز ہے محو خود نمائی ہر ذرہ شہید کبر یائی  
 بے ذوق نمود زندگی موت تعمیر خودی میں ہے خدائی  
 رائی زور خودی سے پرست پرست ضعف خودی سے رائی  
 ہیں عقدہ کشایہ خار صحرا کم کر گلہ برہنہ یائی

Everything is bent on self-revelation,  
 Every particle is dying for expansion to Divinity!  
 Without the urge for self-expansion life is but a living death;  
 The cultivation of Self makes men Divine.  
 Development of Self turns a mustard seed into a mountain,  
 Its neglect makes the mountain but a seed of mustard!  
 The road to success lies through these very thorns of the desert,  
 A truce to this complaint about barefootedness!

How beautifully Iqbal sings of his philosophy of the ego in these graceful and melodious lines! It required a superb artist to achieve this, but it must be admitted that Iqbal's task was rendered easier by poets like Hāfiz, Bedil and Ghālib. So far as I know, Hāfiz was the first great poet to discuss philosophy and sociology, as he knew them, as well as politics in his lyrics.<sup>1</sup> This trend continued in Persian till we find in 'Urfī and Bedil abstruse philosophical subjects discussed with the grace and charm of which only a Persian *ghazal* is capable. The same effect was achieved by Ghālib in Urdu.

In all lyric poets there is noticeable a deadening of the lyrical pulse as the poet's age advances. This is so remarkable that it has led some critics to classify lyric poetry into two distinct classes: passionate and intellectual. As with age man's passion suffers, the lyrical fervour fades; and poets begin writing more and more intel-

<sup>1</sup> In this connection readers are requested to refer to Shīblī Nu'mānī's *Shā'ir-al-'Ajam*, Vol. V, pp. 38-47. Marif Press, Azamgarh (India), 1920.

lectual verses in which the reflective element replaces the fervently passionate. This is true in a more or less degree of all great lyric poets. In Iqbal we do not notice any deadening of the lyrical fervour, and the main reason for this was his mysticism. Very early in his poetic career, mysticism enveloped Iqbal's outlook, and as with age the influence of mysticism deepened, there was no gradation of his verses from lyric to passionate and intellectual. Some have remarked that in some of the Urdu poems he wrote towards the end the reflective element predominates, and the graceful spontaneity of earlier poems is absent. But all those who have studied him carefully will refute this suggestion most unreservedly. Spontaneity, grace, charm and melody are present even in his later poems, and the emotional intensity is always at a high pitch. But in some of the poems—especially in *Bāl-i-Jibra'il*—there is undoubtedly an oddity of expression which on first reading might strike one as lack of spontaneity. The reason is not far to seek. As Iqbal's outlook developed, he had new mystic experiences, old words and expressions were inadequate to describe them, so he had to coin new expressions. From the very beginning, Iqbal invented new expressions and phrases, but at first the need for them was not so great, and perhaps Iqbal did not then dare defy conventions too brazenly, although he always maintained that it was necessary to do so in a language like Urdu. Towards the end, the need for these new expressions became irresistible, and Iqbal threw overboard all respect for literary usage. Listen to the following *ghazal* from *Bāl-i-Jibra'il*:

مٹا دیا میرے ساتی نے عالم من و تو  
 بلا کے مجھ کو مے، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ  
 نہ بے نہ شعر نہ ساتی نہ شورِ جنگ و رباب  
 سکوت کوہ و لب جوئے و لالہ خود رو  
 گدائے میکدہ کی شان بے نیازی دیکھ  
 پہنچ کے چشمہ حیواں پہ توڑتا ہے سبو

جمیل ترین گل ولالہ فیض سے اس کے  
نگاہ شاعر رنگیں نوا میں ہے جاو

My *Sāqī* has effaced all distinction of I and thou,  
By giving me a drink of 'There is no God but He'.  
No wine, no poetry, no *Sāqī*, and no sound of the harp and the lute;  
There is only the silence of the mountains, the brink of a stream and  
the wild poppies!  
Behold the stately unconcern of the beggar from the Tavern—  
He dashes his cup to the ground on reaching the Fount of Life.  
By its grace the rose and the poppy acquire a fresh beauty,  
There is magic, indeed, in the glance of a poet with colourful melodies.

Persian poetry abounds with mysticism, which as every student of Persian lyrics knows contributes largely to its great charm. Whereas with others the fire of passion grows weaker with age, and the intensity of emotion and fervour tend to disappear, for mystics age brings new experiences, new raptures and new ecstasies. With age the poet advances mystically, and these new experiences in themselves generate an impassioned eloquence and spontaneity.

We have briefly surveyed the chief reasons for Iqbal's greatness as a lyric poet, and can now consider the chief characteristics of his lyric poetry. First and foremost is the mysticism to which we have just referred. Mysticism is the very soul of Persian poetry. Before Abū Sa'īd Abu'l-Khair<sup>1</sup> began singing of his mystic experiences, his poetry lacked the charm which to-day is acclaimed all over the world. The very mention of mysticism brings to our minds names like Sanāi, Farīdud-Dīn 'Aṭṭār, Maulānā Rūmī and Jāmī. The first question is, 'What is mysticism?' Mysticism is a mood in which the poet enters the Divine realm, sees the celestial light and hears heavenly music. All these fill him with ecstasies and raptures. A mystic poet retains his experiences and relates some of these to others when he returns to himself. Iqbal, believing intuition to be a source of human knowledge, and that the realm of mysticism was real, said,

<sup>1</sup> According to Iqbal the first great Persian Sūfī poet was 'Irāqī. In this connection please see p. 44 of *Iqbal Nāmāh*, where Iqbal says that 'Irāqī in his *Lam'āt* has just presented a rendering of *Ibnul 'Arabī's Fuṣūṣ*.



Nor is there any reason to suppose that thought and intuition are essentially opposed. They spring up from the same root and complement each other. The one grasps Reality piecemeal, the other grasps it in its wholeness. The one fixes the gaze on the eternal, the other on the temporal aspect of Reality. The one is present enjoyment of the whole of Reality; the other aims at traversing the whole by slowly specifying and closing up the various regions of the whole for exclusive observation. Both are in need of each other for mutual rejuvenation. Both seek visions of the same Reality which reveals itself to them in accordance with their function in life. In fact, intuition, as Bergson rightly says, is only a higher kind of intellect.<sup>1</sup>

To him mysticism was only another form of intellect. The progress of modern physics and the discoveries of Einstein have made us realise that Reality is not only unknown but is unknowable by purely intellectual methods, and the mystic sense in man remains the only short cut to Reality.

Mystic thought in Islam developed two schools, the fundamental difference between the two being the doctrine of unityism. As described elsewhere, this doctrine inculcated pantheism and preached self-annihilation. The school of Ṣūfīs, believing in unityism, sought self-effacement by merging in God. They considered the Infinite Being as an ocean of existence from which the waves of phenomena arise, only to sink back, and for them being and not-being are identical. All efforts and even moral striving lose independence, because all the good that a creature does has its real source in the Will of God. According to the other school, the theists, the universe and the creation have a real existence apart from God. The creation is not an illusion or a vain show; it is an earnest Reality. In early Ṣūfism we find a movement away from the world to God, first actuated by fear and then dominated by love and gnosis. But whatever the motive force, the doctrine of unityism, accepted in its entirety, cut at the root of all morality and justified the remark of William Jones that 'Monism is a moral holiday'.

<sup>1</sup> *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 2-3. In another place Iqbal says: 'The revealed and mystic literature of mankind bears ample testimony to the fact that religious experience has been too enduring and dominant in the history of mankind to be rejected as mere illusion. There seems to be no reason, then, to accept the normal level of human experience as fact and reject its other levels as mystical and emotional.'



This is not the place either to trace the history and nature of mysticism in Persian poetry or to describe the mysticism of Iqbal. A reference to Iqbal's mysticism was necessary mainly to point out the influence it had on his lyric poetry, in contrast with the influence that it exercised on the vast majority of Persian and Urdu mystic poets. Iqbal's healthy mysticism enabled him to portray healthy sentiments which will interest healthy minds in all ages and in all countries. A majority of mystic poems in Urdu and Persian not only preach 'a moral holiday', but are characterised by blank emptiness and desolation; in fact are little more than a wail of despair. Life is an illusion, so being and not-being are equally good, and the best a man can do is to put an end to life, and so on. In his lyrical poetry Iqbal provides a refreshing antidote to all such pernicious teachings and unhealthy sentiments.

Other important characteristics of Iqbal's lyric poetry are his conceptions of Beauty and Love. Beauty is said to be the special domain of poets, who see beauty in everything. Everything in this world was certainly beautiful in Iqbal's eyes, and in his poetry he resolves everything into the good and the beautiful. He resolves even evil—a seeming impossibility—into the perfect rhythm of life. When we talk of Beauty with reference to Persian poets, we must bear in mind that the Persians are a highly æsthetic people with a very keen eye for beauty in every form. Their poets have not only always appreciated beauty in its many forms, but have also described its manifold forms exquisitely.

So to add anything original to a Persian poet's conception of beauty seemed almost impossible. But here too Iqbal is distinctly original. Whilst he saw beauty in everything, the beauty which appealed to him most was the beauty of power and perfection. Beauty is a mental experience, not a quality of things, and different types of beauty appeal to different people. In everything that is powerful and perfect Iqbal sees an approach to the All-Powerful, the Ultimate Ego, Who is Most Beautiful. This new conception of Beauty has imparted to his lyric poetry that robust vitality and manliness which is singularly lacking in the poems of Persian and other Urdu poets. While Sā'dī, Hāfiz, Khusrau, Šā'ib and Meer all have grace and charm, they lack that vitalising glow, that invigorating touch which is the chief glory of Iqbal.

"The author known as Longinus, perhaps in the first century A.D., said that greatness in Nature and art pleases us because it

echoes a greatness in our own souls. Plotinus, the Neoplatonist, says that a man who desires beauty is like one who not recognizing his own face in a mirror should fall in love with it.<sup>1</sup> The sight of any object with power and perfection throws Iqbal into ecstasy. He sees a beauty in the eagle and the hawk, more inspiring than the beauty of the *bulbul* and the *qumrī*. The sight of mighty mountains fills him with joy, and he is always talking of the Alwand and the Himalayas.

شب من سحر نمودی کہ بہ طلعت آفتابی  
تو بطلعت آفتابی سزد این کہ بے حجابی  
تو عیار کم عیاران تو قرار بے قراران  
تو دوائے دل نگاران مگر این کہ دیریابی  
بہ جلال تو کہ در دل دگر آرزو ندارم  
بجز این دعا کہ بخشی بکبوتران عقابی

Thou hast brought to an end my night by thy Phœbus-like  
radiance!  
Thou hast the radiance of Phœbus which calleth for unveiling!  
Thou art wealth to the indigent; thou bringest solace to the  
disconsolate!  
Thou art a remedy to the heart-sick but not readily available!  
By Thy Glory I harbour no other desire in my heart  
Except the prayer that Thou may'st grant the might of an eagle  
to the pigeons.

Coleridge says: 'In looking at objects of Nature I seem rather to be seeking a symbolical language for something within me than observing anything new.' So Iqbal sees in all powerful and perfect things a reflection of his powerful soul.

While it is quite true that Iqbal's ideas about the nature of Beauty and its relationship with Love underwent considerable changes at different periods of his life, it can be safely said that towards the end he subscribed to æsthetic vitalism. At this stage,

<sup>1</sup> E. F. Carritt: *What is Beauty*, p. 109.

the will-to-power or ego-energy becomes the creator of beauty. Beauty is in fact only a quality of the ego in action, of the will-to-power. Ugliness appears when the will-to-power runs dry. The effect of this is to import virility into his lyric poetry, virility of a type not found often in any Oriental poetry.

While Iqbal sang of all the human emotions, the theme of Love is paramount. Persian and Urdu possess a vast literature of Love poetry, and this powerful emotion has been dealt with from every point of view, but to find any correspondence with Iqbal's ideas on Love we have to go to Rūmī. Reference has already been made to the wide sense in which Iqbal uses the term Love. To him, Love is a force that provides not only a solution for all human difficulties but also for all human wickedness. It is a cement for the separate elements of the Universe. The whole world would be a sepulchre without the magic, life-giving touch of Love. As we have seen, Iqbal's philosophy of life insists on ceaseless activity and insatiable yearning, and these are characteristics of his Love also. But although Love adds to our restlessness, it is this restlessness which makes life worth living:

این حرف شاد آوری گویم و می رقصم  
از عشق دل آساید با این همه بے تابی

I utter this mirth-giving phrase and dance with glee;  
From Love the heart receives solace in spite of all restlessness.

When dealing with the powers of Love, Iqbal also recognises the influence of Intellect, and repeatedly when describing Love he refers to Intellect to bring home the difference between these two world forces:

من بنده آزادم، عشق است امام من  
عشق است امام من، عقل است علام من  
اے عالم رنگ و بو این صحبت مآتا چند  
مرگ است دوام تو، عشق است دوام من

I am a free man, Love is my leader,  
 Love is my leader and Intellect is my slave.  
 O world of colour and smell, how long is this association—  
 Thou art to perish, and I am to survive through Love.

Intellect is desirable, but Love is more so. The former is necessary because it preserves the self and puts salutary checks on the stray ramblings of the heart, but Iqbal does not regard it as absolutely necessary for human development. Love needs Intellect to steer its course, to keep it confined within the bounds of reality, but Intellect can be ignored with great advantage at times. And if men decide to choose as their sole guide the cool calculating Intellect, they cannot achieve much. Hussain, guided by Love, faced the ordeals of Karbalā, despising the counsel of Intellect—and look at the result! To-day all over the world millions of men, of all colours and races, think of him with respect and affection. Opposed to him was Yazīd, guided solely by Intellect; and people all over the world remember him with feelings of horror and disgust:

بے خطر کو دہڑا آتش نرود میں عشق  
 عقل ہے محو تماشاے لب بام ابھی

Love jumped into Nimrod's fire unhesitatingly,  
 Intellect is still hesitating and watching from the roof-top!

While Iqbal's Love can be described as Plato's Ruler, who must hold sway, his Intellect corresponds to Plato's Auxiliary, whose function is guarding and whose main duty is to obey and help the Ruler.

Sometimes Love causes depression and the poet starts complaining:

آشنا ہر خار را از قصہٴ ماساختی  
 در بیابانِ جنونِ بردی و رسوا ساختی  
 جرم ما از دانهٴ تقصیر او از سجدهٴ

نے بان بیچارہ می سہاڑی نہ باماساختی  
 طرح نوافکن کہ ماجدت پسند افتادہ ایم  
 ! بن جہ حشر خانہ 'امروز و فردا ساختی

Thou hast informed every thorn of our story,  
 Thou hast dragged me in the desert of madness and exposed the  
 whole affair!

Our sin consisted in eating the forbidden fruit. His mistake  
 was in refusing to bow

Neither hast Thou kept up with that hapless one nor with us!

Lead us into new paths for we love fresh adventures.

What is in this mystery-house of to-day and to-morrow?

Love does not recognise conventional distinctions:

فرقے نہ نہد عاشق در کعبہ و بتخانہ  
 این جلوت جانانہ آن خلوت جانانہ  
 شادم کہ مزار من در کوئے حرم بستند  
 راہے زمرہ کاوم از کعبہ بہ بتخانہ  
 در دشت جنون من جبریل ز بون صیدے  
 یزدان بہ کمند آورائے ہمت مردانہ  
 اقبال بہ منبر ز درازے کہ نہ باید گفت  
 ناپختہ برون آمد از خلوت مینخانہ

A lover knows not the difference between the Ka'ba and the Idol-  
 House.

For him this is the common and that the exclusive meeting-place of  
 the Beloved.

I am happy that they have built my grave in the precincts of the Ka'ba,  
 From there I shall make a way with my eyelashes to the Idol-House!

In the forest of my love Gabriel is a humble prey,

Try to capture God Himself, O manly resolve!

Iqbal has proclaimed from the pulpit the secret that was not to be divulged;  
Perchance he has emerged raw from the solitude of the Tavern.

Let us now consider Iqbal's position among the very fine Urdu and Persian lyric poets; such master-artists as Hāfiz, Ṣā'ib, Khusrau, Ghālib, Meer, Dāgh, and many others. They would all be ranked by any critic as amongst the world's greatest lyric poets; the poetry of Hāfiz is of such a high order that it has aroused admiration even in Goethe. But all these poets have certain defects, the chief of which are:

(i) Except in a few lyrics there is no unity of theme, for it changes in each line.

(ii) Sincerity is lacking, mainly because the poets have never experienced the emotions they try to portray. To take one instance, every lyric poet in Urdu and Persian sings of love, but most of the poets passed their lives in monasteries or in cloisters, so that they never knew what love was. When Abū Sa'īd, Abu'l-Khair introduced mysticism in poetry, matters improved considerably, as many poets were mystics, but even in the domain of mysticism an atmosphere of unreality soon spread, because it is not given to all of us to appreciate or partake of mystical experiences, and the essence of all lyric poetry is personality. Some of the poets who aped mysticism openly said:

این نشہ بہ من نیست اگر باد گرے مست

If I am not under this intoxication, others are.

Another great poet said about mysticism:

برائے شعر گفتن خوب است

It is a good theme for verse-making.

Any poetry written with such a mentality was bound to be lifeless and ineffective.

(iii) There is something unnatural about most of the lyric poetry in the Urdu and Persian languages. Apart from the fact that there is a suffocating amount of feeling, the sentiments themselves are such that most readers cannot share them. For example,



a sweetheart, according to the majority of the poets, is a tyrant and a sadist. These are not feelings one would entertain towards an object of love.

While these defects are found in most Urdu and Persian poets, it must be stated that there are important exceptions. As a matter of fact even the mention of such defects may come as a surprise to a large number of readers who have read lyric poetry in these languages, because its charm is irresistible and undeniable. The secret of this great charm lies in the beauty of language and vividness of imagery, but unfortunately the harmony between the subject and its medium is lacking. The sentiments portrayed are in most cases unreal and in some cases unnatural, but the beauty of the language is so overpowering that few pause to analyse the sentiments. When we remember that Iqbal's lyrics are free from all these blemishes, and in addition are permeated with a spirit of virility which is singularly lacking in all Oriental poetry, it will not be difficult to determine Iqbal's place among Urdu and Persian lyric poets. He ranks with the greatest: with Hāfiz and Ghālib. The very fact that Iqbal is put in the same class as Hāfiz means his inclusion in that select band to which no more than a dozen poets of the world have gained admittance. It is true that Iqbal did not write much lyric verse. In fact the amount is very small compared with the works of well-known lyric poets in Urdu and Persian; but as somebody said when referring to Housman, nobody finds fault with a violin because it has only a few strings.

Here are two of Iqbal's lyrics:

صورت نہ پرستم من، بتخانہ شکستم من  
 آن سیل سبک سیرم، ہر بند گستم من  
 در بود و نبود من اندیشہ گمانہا داشت  
 از عشق ہویدا شد، ایس نکته کہ ہستم من  
 در دیر نیسا ز من، در کعبہ نماز من  
 ز نار بدوشم من، تسبیح بدستم من

Not inclined to worship the apparent, I broke the Idol-House;  
 I am that rushing torrent which sweeps aside all obstacles.  
 About my being or not-being Intellect had doubts;  
 Love revealed the secret that I am!  
 In a temple I offer homage, in the Ka'ba I offer prayers,  
 I have the sacred thread round my shoulders and a rosary in  
 my hand!

کبھی اے حقیقت منتظر! نظر آبا س مجاز میں  
 کہ ہزاروں سجدے تڑپ رہے ہیں مری حسین نیاز میں  
 طرب آشنائے غروش ہو، تو نوا ہے محرم گوش ہو  
 وہ سرود کیا کہ چھپا ہوا ہو سکوت پردہ ساز میں  
 نہ کہیں جہاں میں اماں ملی، جو اماں ملی تو کہاں ملی  
 مرے جرم خانہ خراب کو ترے عفو بندہ نواز میں  
 جو میں سر بہ سجدہ ہوا کبھی تو زمین سے آنے لگی صدا  
 ترا دل تو ہے صنم آشنا تجھے کیا ملے گا نماز میں

For once, O awaited Reality, reveal Thyself in material form,  
 For a thousand prostrations are quivering eagerly in my submissive  
 brow.

Know the pleasure of tumult: thou art a tune, consort with the ear!  
 What is that melody worth which hides itself in the silent chords of  
 the harp.

My dark misdeeds found no refuge in the wide world—  
 The only refuge they found was in Thy benign forgiveness.  
 Even as I laid down my head in prostration a cry arose from the  
 ground:

Thy heart is enamoured of the Idol, what shalt thou gain by prayer?

*Mathnawīs*

در نہی گنجد جو عمان من بحر باید ہے طوفان من

No river will contain my 'Oman;  
My flood requires whole seas to hold it.

THERE ARE CRITICS who maintain that a long poem is really a contradiction in terms. According to them, poetry is essentially the language of excitement, and as excitement is always of brief duration, there can be no such thing as a long poem. While there is force to this argument, it must be said that this criticism of long poems is to a certain extent based on a misunderstanding of the true nature of poetry. While the universal appeal of short poems, especially lyrics, cannot be denied, it must be admitted that long poems, by giving the poet an opportunity for sustained effort, provide a truer test of his art. Even the greatest poets find it difficult to keep up the glow of thought for any length of time, and even some of the best poems contain dull passages; only the superb artists are capable of avoiding dullness. The true measure of any poet is provided not only by the grace and energy of his flight, but by his power of sustaining it. Its grace has to be maintained when emotional fervour is at low ebb. While it would be wrong to suggest that the excellence of a poem depends upon its length, it can safely be said that a successful long poem can only be composed by a great poet. Professor E. De Selincourt clearly points out the difficulties involved:

Naturally enough, the long poem has not, throughout, the intensity demanded of the lyric; but its great moments are the more telling in that they are set in a wider context of thought and feeling. In the lyric we must supply this context for ourselves, and often fail adequately to supply it; in the longer poem

we reach the heights step by step with the poet, following the same path as he had traversed; and his poem is far greater in its total effect upon us either than the mere sum of its finest parts or than a sheaf of separate lyrics. The argument against the long poem implies a simple antithesis between pure poetry and bald prose, whereas prose and poetry shade imperceptibly into one another, and the poet's aim is accomplished if his less inspired passages are lifted by style and metre so securely above the level of prose that the poetic impression is not disturbed. That all poets have not achieved this is true enough. To maintain a mastery of form when the emotional pitch is low needs a finer technical skill than to write well under the compelling influence of strong emotion.<sup>1</sup>

While our appreciation of long and short poems depends a good deal upon our temperament, the study of a poet's long poems is necessary for a true estimation of his poetic art, because only long poems provide a sufficient test. Iqbal has written a number of long poems, and of these a good many can be classified as *mathnawīs*—a very wide class of poetry. According to the usual classification adopted in Persian and Urdu prosody, *mathnawīs* can be best described as many-rhymed poems, as opposed to the one-rhymed poems, *ghazals* and *qaṣīdās*, in which there is no internal rhyming in the verses, except the first. The *mathnawī* was really started because it was found very difficult to keep on one rhyme in a long poem. All long poems in Persian and Urdu like the *Shah Nāmāh* of Firdausī, the *Sikander Nāmāh* of Nizāmī and the *Shāh-al-Bayān* of Meer Ḥasan are in the form of *mathnawīs*. As pointed out by Professor E. G. Browne in his *Literary History of Persia*, most European poetry which is not written in blank verse belongs to this category, Tennyson's *Locksley Hall* furnishing an excellent example. It must be remarked here that such a classification is, perhaps more than any other classification of poetry, only formal and not of any great help in study. Nevertheless it is always convenient to have a classification.

A list of the more important *mathnawīs* by Iqbal is given here: *Asrār-i-Khūdī*, *Rumūz-i-Bekhūdī*, *Gulshan-i-Rāz Jadīd*, *Bandagī Nāmāh*, *Musāfir*, *Pas chāi bāyad kard*, *Sāqī Nāmāh*, and *Jāvid Nāmāh*.

<sup>1</sup> E. De Selincourt: *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, p. 233. Oxford University Press.

Out of the above poems only *Asrār-i-Khūdī*, *Rumūz-i-Bekkhūdī*, *Musāfir*, *Pas chai bāyad kard* and *Jāvid Nāmāh* were published as separate books. *Gulshan-i-Rāḡ Jadīd* and *Bandagī Nāmāh* are included in *Zabūr-i-‘Ajam*. *Sāqī Nāmāh* is included in *Bāl-i-Jibra’īl*.

Classification by form does not give us any idea of substance of *mathnawīs* and for any proper critical appreciation it is necessary to attempt a classification according to the substance. For instance, a *mathnawī* may be epic, philosophic, didactic or narrative. And so merely to say that a poem is a *mathnawī* does not convey very much except to give us an indication of its length. Most of Iqbal’s *mathnawīs* can be said to represent philosophic poetry.<sup>1</sup> There is in some quarters a strong prejudice against all poetry which is supposed to be philosophic, although this prejudice is based on a misunderstanding. The line of division between lyric and philosophic poetry is after all a thin one, because a philosophic poem, as much as a lyric, exhibits the poet’s intensity of passion. As regards philosophy itself, no poet can compose a great poem unless he has a background of ideas and the highest moral perception. Ruskin said: ‘That art is the greatest which conveys to the spectator, by any means whatsoever, the greatest number of the greatest ideas.’<sup>2</sup> Whether we entirely agree with this dictum or not, it cannot be denied that a poet’s ideas considerably influence his art by increasing the emotional intensity of all that he writes. But we must remember that in philosophical poetry we have to consider the value of the thought along with the poet’s success in giving it a poetic rendering. If the poet is capable of achieving success in poetic rendering, the background of ideas not only serves to quicken the emotional pitch of all that he writes but also enriches his art.

We do not, therefore, quarrel with any poet who offers us philosophy in the fashion of poetry. We require only that this

<sup>1</sup> Most of Iqbal’s philosophical poems can in fact be classified as ‘metaphysical’ poetry. It is not easy to improve upon Professor Grierson’s definition of metaphysical poetry: ‘Metaphysical poetry, in the full sense of the term, is a poetry which, like that of the *Divina Comedia*, the *De Rerum Natura*, perhaps Goethe’s *Faust*, has been inspired by a philosophical conception of the universe and the role assigned to the human spirit in the great drama of existence.’ (H. J. C. Grierson: *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century*, p. xiii.) Just because some of Iqbal’s poems are metaphysical a casual study of these poems has led some critics to underrate the universal appeal of his poetry.

<sup>2</sup> *Modern Painters*, Part I, Section 1, Chapter III.



philosophy shall be transfigured by imagination and feeling; that it shall be shaped into a thing of beauty; that it will be wrought into true poetic expression; and that thus in reading him we shall always be keenly aware of the difference between his rendering of philosophic truth and any mere prose statement of it. These conditions fulfilled, we welcome the poet as teacher and moralist, because we know that in his hands the truths of life and conduct will acquire a higher potency and value.<sup>1</sup> •

If we analyse the prejudice against philosophic poetry, it will be found that generally this is not due to the fact that a poem is philosophic but to the fact that it is not poetry at all. One has only to refer to Pope's *Essay on Man*, which consists merely of versified philosophical tags and is not high poetry at all.

Philosophical poems are common in Persian, and most of them are of a very high order. It was Nizāmī who in his *Sikander Nāmā Bahārī* first recounted abstruse philosophical discussions in beautiful poetry. Iqbal's philosophical as well as metaphysical poems are excellent. His passionate eloquence imparts to the poems a richness of effect which is most noticeable in spite of the simplicity of the language. Throughout, the style is elevated—vigorous yet musical, clear yet suggestive. His well-known poems *Asrār* and *Rumūz* contain several fables and apologues, one or two retold from modern European authors. These serve to hold the reader's attention and relieve the monotony to a great extent. *Asrār-i-Khūdī* describes the principles which govern the development of individuals. In *Rumūz*, Iqbal has described the basic principles on which the organisation of ideal human society should be based. In illustrating these truths he has drawn freely from Islamic tenets, so much so that some critics have even gone to the extent of saying that *Rumūz* describes Islamic teachings. Thus, according to Iqbal, human society can be properly organised only if we recognise the fundamental principle of human brotherhood, and as explained elsewhere, this is not stressed so repeatedly in any other society as in Islam. In his search for the concrete, Iqbal had to turn to some existing social system. Shairp put it: 'It is true that poetry refuses to be made the

<sup>1</sup> W. H. Hudson: *An Introduction to the Study of Literature*, p. 95. George G. Harrap and Co. Ltd, 1949.



hand-maid of any one philosophy or view of life or system of belief, but it is equally true that it naturally allies itself only with what is highest and best in human nature; and in whatever philosophy or belief this is enshrined, thence poetry will draw its finest impulses.<sup>1</sup>

We must remember that the truth is one, although its apt presentment shows different facets in different contexts. Some of Iqbal's references to Islamic society can be applied with equal force to other forms of society.

In both *Asrār* and *Rumūz*, the lyrical invocations at the end are most remarkable for the choice diction, ardour of passion and eloquent spontaneity.

*Asrār-i-Khūdī* attracted world-wide attention when it was translated into English by Professor R. A. Nicholson. Many Western critics considered the poem a classic. In his introduction the translator wrote: 'The artistic quality of the poem is remarkable when we consider that its language is not the author's own. I have done my best to preserve as much of this as a literal translation would allow. Many passages of the original are poetry of the kind that once read is not easily forgotten, e.g., the description of the Ideal Man as a deliverer for whom the world is waiting, and the noble invocation which brings the book to an end.'

*Gulshan-i-Rāz Jadīd* deals with abstruse mystical problems. The poet sets himself nine questions and then goes on to give replies to them. After reading the poem, Goethe's words come to mind: 'I am inclined to believe that poetic art is possibly the only instrument which can at all suffice to express such mysteries; they would have an absurd effect in prose, because they can only be conveyed by contradictions which the reason is not prepared to accept.'<sup>2</sup>

This poem is named after the *Mathnawī* of Maḥmūd Shabistārī called *The Secret Rose Garden*. Sa'dud-Dīn Maḥmūd Shabistārī was born at Shabistar, a village eight miles from Tabriz, in about 1250. The poem is said to have originated when one Mīr Husainī Halvī put seventeen questions on mysticism to Maḥmūd at a meeting. Maḥmūd spontaneously replied in verse. Later on he amplified the verse, and the collection was published as *Gulshan-i-Rāz* or *The*

<sup>1</sup> J. C. Shairp: *Aspects of Poetry*, p. 29. The Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1896.

<sup>2</sup> E. Ludwig: *Goethe*, p. 544.

*Secret Rose Garden.* Iqbal in his poems deals with similar problems in a new light.

*Bandagī Nāmāh* is a poem on the evils of slavery, and its object is to bring home the fundamental truth that human personality can develop only in an atmosphere of freedom. Slavery in any form, political or economic, thwarts human development and distorts the creative impulse in man, with the result that slaves come to entertain false ideas even about fine arts. Referring to the artistic tendencies of free and healthy people, Iqbal describes the Qutab Minār and the Tāj in beautiful language. About the Tāj he says:

یک نظر آن گوهر نابے نگر  
 تاج را در زیر مستابے نگر  
 مرمرش ز آب روان گردندہ تر  
 یک دم آنجا از ابد پایندہ تر۔  
 عشق مردان سر خود را گفته است  
 سنگ را بانوک مرغان سفته است  
 عشق مردان نقد خوبان را عیار  
 حسن را ہم پرده درہم پرده دار

Look awhile on that pearl of great purity!  
 Look at the Tāj on a moonlit night!  
 Its marble seems to flow more rapidly than gushing  
 water,  
 A moment spent there is longer than eternity!  
 Man's soul has here revealed its secret,  
 Has pierced stones with slender things like eyelashes.  
 Man's love is a standard for judging beauty,  
 It serves to hide as well as to reveal beauty!

It is by descriptive passages such as these that Iqbal lightens his long poems.

Some of Iqbal's long poems are in the form of epics, the most notable being *Taskhīr-i-Fītrat* and *Jāvid Nāmāh*. The classic division of poetry into epic, lyric and dramatic is mainly formal. It is unnecessary to discuss here what constitutes epic poetry but one can say to the extent that if Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Dante's *Divine Comedy* are epic poems, then *Taskhīr-i-Fītrat* and *Jāvid Nāmāh* are also epics. Discussing epic poetry W. B. Worsfold says:

On the other hand, the composition of this form of poetry is characterised by an essential difficulty which makes its successful execution exceedingly rare. Its form is so great that it requires a vast volume of thought, and thought of the highest kind, to endow it with dignity, and genuine and powerful source of inspiration to endow it with life. Properly it should sum up the thought of an epoch or give expression to the aspirations of a people; and that is why in the nature of things the great epics can almost be counted upon the fingers of two hands: Hindu epics such as the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius, the *Aeneid*, the *Nibelungenlied*, the *Inferno* and *Paradise Lost*.<sup>1</sup>

In *Taskhīr-i-Fītrat* or 'Conquest of Nature' Iqbal has retold the story of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. He was attracted by the theme from his youth, and it was only owing to his preoccupation with other tasks that he did not attempt this work on a wider canvas. According to Iqbal, man can regain Paradise, not through anybody's intercession, but by developing his ego and thus gaining sway over the world of matter. To regain Paradise each man has to rely on himself and not on vicarious atonement. The poet has dealt with the subject in an entirely original and graceful manner and has depicted the whole drama of man—his creation, his fall and his redemption through his own efforts. The keynote of the poem is faith, and every line serves to inspire the reader with faith in himself and in his ability to carry out his glorious mission on this earth. Iqbal has written nothing which is richer in music or more alive with passionate feeling.

But Iqbal's *magnum opus* is *Jāvid Nāmāh*. Within a few years of its publication the poem became a classic, and one great scholar proclaimed that the poem would rank with Firdausi's *Shāh Nāmāh*,

<sup>1</sup> W. B. Worsfold: *Judgement in Literature*, p. 83.

Rūmī's *Mathnawī*, Sa'dī's *Gulistān* and the *Dīwān* of Hāfiz. Nor was this tribute an exaggeration, as subsequent criticism showed. In this poem, the poet accompanied by Rūmī, who is to him what Virgil is to Dante, visits the various planets and meets historical personalities who in their dialogues elucidate eternal truths.

In judging a poem we have to consider two things: the style and the substance. So far as the style is concerned, *Jāvid Nāmā* belongs to the very first rank of Persian verse. It is unsurpassed in grandeur of expression, in beauty of diction and in richness of illustration. As regards theme, the poem deals with the everlasting conflict of the soul, and by telling the story of human struggle against sin, shows mankind the path to glory and peace. In every line the poet makes us feel that he has something to say that is not only worth saying, but is also designed to give us pleasure. Thus in style as well as in theme the poem is a masterpiece.

Before the start of the journey, Zarwān, the embodiment of Time and Space, asks the poet to become independent of these limitations, and as soon as the poet does this he feels himself transported to a place where he can listen to the song of the stars welcoming him.

The poet first visits the Moon. Here Rūmī introduces him to a Hindu sage, known as Jehān Dost or the 'Lover of Creation', who is seated under a tree absorbed in meditation in the fashion of a Hindu Yogi. In his talk with the sage Rūmī makes it clear that for man the way to progress lies through the synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures. East has been concentrating on the spiritual and neglecting the material, while West has been concentrating on the material and neglecting the spiritual.

شرق حق را دید و عالم را ندید  
غرب در عالم غریب از حق رسید

The East saw God but failed to see the world of matter;  
The West got embroiled in the world and neglected God.

The sage agrees with Rūmī's remarks but conveys to the poet the heartening news that the dormant East is after all going to wake up from sleep and get busy. After a brief discussion on the secrets of life the sage disappears. The poet then meets

Sarosh, the angel of optimism, who sings an inspiring song whose every note vibrates with optimism:

اے زاهد ظاہر بین گیرم کہ خودی فانی است  
لیکن تو نہ می بینی طوفان بہ جباب اندر

O pious one, who can see only superficialities, I grant that the  
selfish mortal,  
But thou hast failed to see the tempest concealed in the bubble.

Later on the poet goes over to the Valley of Yarghmeed, where he comes across the tablets of Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ and Muhammad—the four great spiritual leaders and teachers of mankind. The poet does not meet the prophets in person but only comes across the tablets, and he illustrates the teachings of the prophets through the mouths of four personalities. Buddha's teachings are explained through the mouth of a dancing girl who embraces Buddhism at the great leader's hand, and Zoroaster's teachings are described through the devil Ahriman. Similarly Christ's teachings are explained through the mouth of Tolstoy, and Muhammad's through the criticism of Abū Jahal, his inveterate opponent. Abū Jahal says:

سینہ ما از محمّد داغ داغ  
از دم او کعبہ را گل شد چراغ  
از ہلاک قیصر و کسریٰ سرود  
نوجوانان راز دست مار بود  
پاش پاش از ضربت شلات و منات  
انتقام از وے بگیر اے کائنات  
مذہب او قاطع ملک و نسب



از قریش و منکر از فضل عرب  
 در نگاه او یکے بالا و پست  
 با غلام خویش بر یک خوان نشست

We are utterly heart-sick because of Muḥammad;  
 His teachings have put out the lights of the Ka'bal  
 He talks of the extinction of Kaiser and Khusrau,  
 And has taken away the youth from our hold.  
 His attacks have shattered the prestige of Lāt and Manāt.  
 O Universe, wreak vengeance on him!  
 His religion abolishes distinctions of race and blood;  
 Though from the Quraish he disowns the superiority  
 of the Arabs.  
 In his religion the high and low are but one,  
 He ate out of the same dish with his slave!

The poet is then transported to Mercury where he meets Jamālud-Dīn Afghānī and Sa'īd Ḥalīm Pāsha, the two great Eastern personalities of the nineteenth century. Here Rūmī introduces the poem as Zinda Raud or the Living River, a name that the poet henceforth uses throughout the book. In his answers to the questions of Afghānī, the poet describes the mistakes which Eastern nations, especially the Turks, the Persian and the Arabs, are making in Westernising themselves. Sa'īd Ḥalīm Pasha compares the East and the West and points out that the salvation of mankind lies in the synthesis of the two cultures, or, as the poet puts it, in wedding reason to love:

غریبان را زیر کی ساز حیات  
 شرفیان را عشق راز کائنات  
 زیر کی از عشق گردد حق شناس  
 کار عشق از زیر کی محکم اساس  
 خیز و نقش عالم دیگر بنده  
 عشق را با زیر کی آمیز ده



In the West Intellect is the source of life:  
 In the East Love is the basis of life.  
 Through Love Intellect grows acquainted with Reality,  
 And Intellect gives stability to the work of Love.  
 Arise and lay the foundations of a new world  
 By wedding Intellect to Love.

Afghānī then describes how the kingdom of the Qur'ān recognises no distinctions of colour and race; there is no land-hunger and no lust for dominion. The basis of culture here is provided by respect for mankind and the enthusiastic development of science. The women here live simple lives without any of the modern vices, and great importance is attached by all to the spiritual values of things. Sa'id Halīm Pāsha then tells Zinda Raud that the religion of God has been fouled by the fanatic Mullā, whose sole function seems to be to create trouble:

دین کافر فکر و تدبیر جهاد      دین ملا فی سبیل اللہ فساد

The religion of *Kāfir* consists of planning for *jihād*<sup>1</sup>  
 The religion of *Mullā*<sup>2</sup> is creating trouble in the name of God!

Afghānī then exhorts the poet to communicate to the Russian people his message in which he compares Islam with Bolshevism. According to Afghānī there is much in common between Islam and Bolshevism, as both aim at the destruction of autocracy in the world, both view capitalism with disfavour, and both disapprove of the priesthood and the church as organised institutions. But while those professing Islam do no more than lip service to its teachings, and even while professing its tenets are not imbued with the true spirit underlying them, the Russians are still entangled in Western intellectualism and materialism, with the result that both the great movements have lost their life-force. Now it is time for the Russians to get rid of irreligious materialism and accept the Qur'ān as their code, which only means wedding Reason to Love.

From Mercury the poet is transported to Venus where he visits

<sup>1</sup> *Jihād* means earnest and ceaseless striving in a noble cause, involving the sacrifice, if need be, of life, person and property.

<sup>2</sup> *Mullā* is the self-styled priest of Islam, which, as a religion, recognises no priesthood.

the abode of the ancient gods. The poet finds them exulting over the defeat of religion by modern forces of materialism and irreligion. Rūmī takes the poet to a region underneath a river where the proud Pharaoh and Kitchener reside. Pharaoh is full of regrets that he failed to acknowledge allegiance to Moses, and warns others to be more careful in such matters. Rūmī compares autocracy and imperialism to robbery, to which Kitchener takes exception.

From Venus, the poet is taken to Mars, where he meets an astronomer. The poet finds that although the people here surpass the Europeans in the study of the sciences and the arts, the materialistic tendencies of modern Europe are not noticeable. The sage of Mars tells the poet that they had their Adam in one Barkhiya whom their Satan, known as Farzmarz, tried to mislead, but as Barkhiya was able to resist the guiles of Farzmarz, the Almighty bestowed on the people the delightful world of Mars. The poet describes in beautiful language the city of Marghdīn, the capital of the planet. One finds no coinage, no machines, no demonstration of militarism and no mendacious propaganda on the planet. All labourers enjoy the fullest benefit of their labour, and there are no capitalists to suck their blood.

The poet then discusses with the sage the problem of destiny. According to the sage, it is possible for man to change his destiny, and man must try to gain perfect mastery of his destiny:

گر ز یک تقدیر خون گرد و جگر      خواه از حق حکم تقدیر دگر  
تو اگر تقدیر نو خواهی رواست      ز آنکه تقدیرات حق لا انتماست

If one destiny does not suit thee,  
Desire from God a different destiny;  
Thy demand for a new destiny is becoming,  
For God can decree numerous destinies.<sup>1</sup>

Before leaving Mars the poet meets the virgin from Europe, brought to Mars by Farzmarz to create trouble. This virgin exhorts

<sup>1</sup> The sentiments described here find an echo in the following lines of Wilcox:

There is no chance, no Destiny, no Fate,  
Can circumvent or hinder or control  
The firm resolve of a determined Soul.

women to eschew maternity and not to submit to men, who are merely out to dominate women.

The poet is then taken to Jupiter where he meets the poet Ghālib, the poetess Tāhira and the mystic Manṣūr Hallāj. The poet discusses the philosophy of life and death with them. While these conversations are going on, Satan appears on the scene. The description of Satan's character attempted by the poet in several other poems is amplified here. Satan is described as a person who likes separation in preference to union. He is a great egotist, for instance, when he says that he uplifted man from a low position of servility and gave him freedom, which was so necessary for the development of his personality. He complains to God about the weak nature of man, who falls such an easy prey to his machinations. He wants a strong adversary so as to be able to measure his strength. Owing to easy triumphs over weak men, life has become monotonous for him, and so he wants to meet an adversary strong enough to disregard his promptings and evil advice:

اے خداوند صواب و ناصواب  
من شدم از صحبت آدم خراب  
هیچ گه از حکم من سر بر نتافت  
چشم از خود بست و خود را در نیافت  
ظرت او خام و عزم او ضعیف  
تاب یک ضربم نیار داین حریف  
بعبت آب و گل از من باز گیر  
مے نیاید کودکی از مرد پیر

O master of all—those in the right as well as those in the wrong,  
Association with mankind has debased me.  
Man never failed to comply with my behest;  
He closed his eyes to himself and never discovered the self.  
His nature is immature and his resolve is weak;  
This adversary cannot stand even one blow from me.

Take back from me this doll of water and clay;  
An old man cannot be expected to indulge in childish pranks.

Iqbal's portrayal of Satan's character is entirely original and deserves a detailed study.

The poet then reaches Saturn, where he meets those mean souls who have been guilty of treason against their own countries and masters—Mīr Ja'far of Bengal and Ṣādiq of Deccan. The two traitors are in a boat hopelessly tossed about by a tempest in a sea of blood. At this moment Hindustan appears with chains and halters of slavery:

آسمان شق گشت و حورے پاک زاد  
پردہ را از چہرہ خود بر کشاد  
در جیش نار و نور لایزال  
دو چشم او سرور لایزال  
عدہ در بر سبک تر از سحاب  
تار و پودش از رگ برگ گلاب  
با چنین خوبی نصیبش طوق و بند  
بر لب او نامہ ہائے درد مند  
گفت رومی "روح ہند است این نگر  
از فغاش سوزم اندر جگر"

The sky burst asunder ushering in a graceful *hourī*,  
Who, as she lifted the veil off her face,  
Displayed a forehead aflame with divine splendour,  
And two eyes beaming with intoxication of divine love.  
Her raiment was of material lighter than the clouds,  
With warp and woof provided by the veins of rose-petals.  
With all these charms her lot but chains and shackles,  
And on her lips naught but heart-rending moans.

Rūmī said: 'Look! this is the soul of Hindustan,  
The bitterness of her moans will affect any heart.'

These stirring lines show Iqbal's concern for the freedom and liberty of all people. The *hourī* complains in touching language of the indifference of those who attach importance to meaningless superstitions and time-worn shibboleths but fail to pay any attention to their own selves.

The two traitors then give a description of their pitiable conditions, and the climax to their tale of miseries is provided by their reference to the fact that when they went to hell in search of asylum, hell refused to give them refuge. In fact, hell did not condescend to pollute its flames with the bodies of such ignoble creatures.

Now the poet reaches the trans-Heaven region, and here the first person he meets is Nietzsche, who tried all his life to grasp Godhead but failed, because he relied mainly on unaided intellect. After seeing Nietzsche, the poet flies up to a higher region where he sees the palace of Sharafun-Nisā, the daughter of 'Abdus Samad, the Governor of the Punjab.

Later on the poet meets the saint Syed 'Alī Hamdānī and the poet Ghanī of Kashmir. The poet refers to the sale of Kashmir by the British:

باد صبا اگر بہ جنیوا گذر کنی  
حرفے زما بہ مجلس اقوام باز گوے  
دہقان و کشت و جوے و خیابان فروختند  
قوے فروختند و چہ ارزان فروختند

O breeze! if you pass by Geneva  
Convey this message of ours to the League of Nations—  
They sold peasants, crops, rivers and gardens;  
In short, sold a whole nation and so cheap at that!

The poet Ghanī of Kashmir refers with certain pride to the fact that most of the leading personalities on the subcontinent of India have hailed from Kashmir. The poet then meets the Hindu poet Bhartrihari and three Eastern potentates—Nādir Shah, Ahmed

Shah Abdālī and Tipū Sultan. Aḥmed Shah Abdālī refers to the growing tendencies in Eastern countries to adopt Western methods of living and styles of dress, and remarks on the futility of this blind imitation:

قوت مغرب نہ از جنگ و رباب  
 نے زرقص دختران بے حجاب  
 نے ز سحر ساحران لاله روست  
 نے ز عریان ساق و نے از قطع پوست  
 محکمى اور نہ از لادینی است  
 ے فروغش از خط لاطینی است  
 قوت افرنگ از علم و فن است  
 از ہمین آتش چراغش روشن است  
 حکمت از قطع و برید جامہ نیست  
 مانع علم و ہنر عمامہ نیست

The secret of the West's strength is not in the lute and guitar,  
 Nor in the promiscuous dancing of her daughters.  
 Nor in the charms of her bright-faced beauties,  
 Nor in bare shins, nor in bobbed hair.  
 Her strength is not from irreligiousness,  
 Nor is her rise due to Latin characters.  
 The strength of the West is due to knowledge and science;  
 Her lamp is alight from this fire only.  
 Knowledge does not depend on the style of your garments,  
 And a turban is no obstacle to the acquisition of knowledge.

As the poet gets ready to leave the trans-Heaven region, he hears the Divine voice. The real secret underlying the development of individuals and communities is explained to him. And here the journey ends.



In the end, the poet addresses youth through his son Jāvid. He advises young men to avoid bad company, to love their fellow creatures, and to develop their personality by constant exertion:

حرف بد را برب آوردن خطاست  
 کافر و مومن همه خلق خداست  
 کم خور و کم خواب و کم گفتار باش  
 گرد خود گردنده چو پر کار باش  
 منکر حق نزد ملا کافر است  
 منکر خود نزد من کافر تر است  
 شیوه اخلاص را محکم بگیر  
 - پاک شو از خوف سلطان و امیر  
 عدل در قهر و رضا از کف ده  
 قصد در فقر و غنا از کف ده  
 زندگی جز لذت پرواز نیست  
 آشیان با نفرت او ساز نیست

It is wrong to utter a bad word;  
 The infidel<sup>1</sup> as well as the faithful<sup>2</sup> are all God's creations.  
 Eat little, sleep little and talk little;  
 Revolve round self as a compass revolves round the centre.  
 A disbeliever in God is a *Kāfir* according to the *Mullā*,  
 But to me one who does not affirm self is a greater *Kāfir*.  
 Always be sincere in all your dealings;  
 Get rid of the fear of kings and potentates.  
 Do not give up justice under any circumstances;  
 Keep to moderation whether rich or poor.  
 Life is a desire to be ever on the wing;  
 A nest is not the place for it.

<sup>1</sup> *Kāfir*.

<sup>2</sup> *Momin*.

What a glorious message! What a beautiful place this world could become if youth would only follow the instructions contained in these inspiring lines and also follow the poet's advice about tolerance and mutual good-will.

It is not proposed to attempt here a critical survey of *Jāvid Nāmāh*. This would need a volume to itself. But some of the outstanding features deserve mention. Most noticeable is the marvelous variety of effect produced by the introduction of lyrical interludes. Iqbal has not only put in his own lyrics but also those of other Persian poets. In one place he has translated a Sanskrit lyric. All this serves to heighten the effect of variety by providing changes in rhythm and style at intervals. A second characteristic is the complete absence of any conscious and laboured effort on the part of the poet. Again and again the highest truths are uttered in language so natural and inevitable that it wins our admiration, and without any effort the poet repeatedly strikes a lofty note. Third, is the idealisation of the characters by giving them thoughts and feelings which the poet has experienced himself. To achieve this in spite of the restrictions of metre and rhyme, one must be a great artist. Fourth, the language used by every character reflects his or her personality. The very sound of the words suggests the characteristics of the person talking. The abrupt and blunt way of talking used by Kitchener is in keeping with his soldierly upbringing. The vivacious talk of Satan reflects his great passion for action. A person using the language used by Satan in the poem cannot be imagined as sitting idle! The passionate devotion of Tāhira to the cause she espoused is reflected in every word she utters.

The poet displays a delicacy of feeling in not meeting the great prophets of the world in person. He just sees their tablets. This reference to tablets brings to mind the mention of tablets or tables in the scriptures of the world. For example we read in *Exodus*: 'And Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.' (*Exodus xxxii: 19.*) In the Qur'ān it is mentioned that

When the anger of Moses  
Was appeased, he took up  
The Tablets: in the writing  
Thereon was Guidance and Mercy  
For such as fear their Lord.

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Another remarkable feature of the poem is the great sympathy and regard with which the poet treats his characters, irrespective of their religious or political views. In fact, the only persons for whom the poet displays any feelings of disgust and contempt are those who proved traitors to their countries and masters. Even when describing them, the language used in the poem is particularly free from abuse or roughness.<sup>1</sup> But perhaps the most remarkable feature of the poem is the complete absence of any dull lines. This will scarcely be believed by those who have not read the poem in the original. But even when the poet deals with highly abstruse philosophical or metaphysical problems no dullness enters. There is no doubt that the poem ranks with the greatest poems of the world.

We have mentioned here only the important *mathnawīs* of Iqbal, but enough has perhaps been said to indicate clearly that all those who turn to Iqbal's *mathnawīs* will find in them a wealth of thought and artistic beauty, not to be easily met with even in the writings of the greatest poets.

<sup>1</sup> In this connection it is interesting to read the following remarks about Dante: 'But if there is prose in the *Divine Comedy*, as there is violence, obscenity and grotesqueness, there is no feebleness.' H. A. L. Fisher: *A History of Europe*, p. 286.

## 8

### *Satire*

IT IS NOT always easy to identify satire. Richard Garnett says: 'Satire, in its literary aspect, may be defined as the expression in adequate terms of the sense of amusement or disgust excited by the ridiculous or unseemly, provided that humour is a distinctly recognisable element; and that the utterance is invested with literary form.'<sup>1</sup> This is a comprehensive definition, but its application in practice cannot always be relied upon owing to the reference to humour. It will always be difficult to decide what proportion of humour is necessary to describe a composition as satire. This spirit of uncertainty is referred to by Worcester:

Thus, among writers of the twentieth century, some use the word 'satire' to signify the particular kind of verse known as formal satire, some will allow it to embrace any type of verse written with satiric intent; some would have it that satire is a formal genre of literature, one that, including prose as well as verse, yet possesses uniform characteristics; some, finally, convinced that any formal theory must involve contradictions and anomalies, identify a work of literature as satire by its motive and spirit alone.<sup>2</sup>

The formal definition of Richard Garnett applied with discrimination and due regard to the fact that a work of literature must be identified as satire by 'its motive and spirit alone' will actually be a sufficiently safe guide. By this criterion several of Iqbal's compositions can be classified as satire, although it is true that his total output of satire is not great and most of his brilliant satire is intermingled with other poetry. In fact, Iqbal often digresses to satirise peoples, institutions or theories, but he does it so artistically that the reader hardly notices any jarring effect; yet in

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

<sup>2</sup> D. Worcester; *The Art of Satire*, p. 4. Harvard University Press, 1940.

some of his poems the satiric spirit is so dominant that there cannot possibly be difficulty about classifying them as satire. But here arises another question: Is satire poetry? Humbert Wolfe's well-known remark 'Byron writes better poetry but worse satire than Pope' echoes the traditional distinction between poetry and satire. This distinction springs from romantic preconceptions regarding poetry. The satirist is commonly regarded as a crude and malicious writer, not fit to be ranked with the artists. The generalisation is totally unjust; some satire is undoubtedly crude, but crudity is not confined to satire and can also be found in other forms of art. It is true that much satire is vapid and inane for the simple reason that mere metrical writing cannot bring access of poetic enthusiasm, but, if the satirist is sincere and keenly perceptive, his composition can be artistic. There is no place in satire for sensuousness and passion; but most satire is based on high sensibility and affords the poet great scope for the imagination and emotions. We are not concerned with the material of the satirist but how he converts it into poetry.

Matthew Arnold was thinking of satirical poetry when he wrote:

The difference between genuine poetry and the poetry of Dryden, Pope and all their school is briefly this: their poetry is composed and conceived in their wits; genuine poetry is composed and conceived in the soul.

But the sight of religious evils shakes Iqbal to his very soul, and it is only then that his genius bursts out into satire. His satires are certainly not the product of intellect alone. If poetry is the store-house of traditional values, if we think it to be the great and creative force fusing a variety of elements into a whole, in short forging 'multeity into unity', as Coleridge calls it, then satire is a complement to this type of poetry, and Wolfe's remarks represent an irrelevant detraction. Thus we start with the premise that satire of the highest order can also be poetry of the highest order. We can agree with Norman Furlong when he says: 'The great satires are great achievements in a rich field.'<sup>1</sup>

In the Urdu and Persian languages some great poets have found a channel for their talents in satire, and both these languages possess a large store of satirical poetry, a good deal of

<sup>1</sup> *English Satire*, p. 22. George G. Harrap and Co. Ltd, London, 1946.

which is artistically of high quality. As regards Sauda, the greatest satirist in Urdu, a critic has remarked that his satires represent Juvenal, Voltaire and Swift together. Similarly in Persian, Anwārī was so fond of satirical writing that his published works contain satires on his wife and son, although some scholars think these to be interpolations and not actually composed by Anwārī. But most of the satires in both Urdu and Persian suffer from certain defects; and are generally, though not always, personal invectives of violent and virulent type, and it was left to Iqbal to impart a new tone to satire in these languages. Before Iqbal, Meer Hasan in Urdu and Kamāl Ismaʿīl Ispahānī in Persian had written satires which, besides being great achievements from the artistic point of view, are balanced, logical and significant. But it can be safely said that, in Urdu and Persian, Iqbal was the first poet to show that it was possible to write satiric verse without being either inflated or harsh. His satires are particularly free from the error so commonly noticeable in a majority of poets, of confounding violence with strength. At times Iqbal is rent by anger at the evils he sees in political, religious and social life; still he does not give way to violence. His strength lies in quietness, lucidity and coherence. For example, deeply affected by the intrigues and treachery of certain politicians he wrote:

گاہ او را با کلیسا ساز باز  
 گاہ پیش دیریان اندر نیاز  
 دین او آئین او سوداگری است  
 عتبری اندر لباس حیدری است  
 ظاہر او از غم دین درد مند  
 باطنش چون دیریان ز نار بند  
 خد خندان است و با کس یار نیست  
 مارا گر خندان شود جز مار نیست



Anon he carries on with the Church,  
 At other times he is in league with temple-dwellers.  
 His creed and his code is but bargaining,  
 A Negro slave in the robes of 'Ali.  
 Outwardly he displays concern for the faith,  
 Yet he carries a sacred thread like the infidels.  
 Smiling with all, he's friend of none,  
 Forsooth snake is a snake even when laughing.

In the above lines the melody of the language is most impressive. His satires are singularly free from personal hostility, and this gives them a spirit of detachment and a sense of dignity. Although some of his satires, notably those on Machiavelli and Husain Ahmed, are directed against persons, the reader at once realises that the individuals here represent a class, and even institutions.

It is a well-known fact that Iqbal entirely disapproved of narrow nationalism and considered that most of the troubles in Europe were due to aggressive and morbid nationalism which only served to divide humanity into water-tight compartments. This condemnation he expressed in the following lines on Husain Ahmed:

عجم ہنوز نداند رموز دین ورنہ  
 ز دیوبند حسین احمد این چہ بوالعجبی است!  
 سر و سر منبر کہ ملت از وطن است  
 چہ بے خبر ز مقام محمد عربی است!  
 بمصطفیٰ برسان خویش را کہ دین ہمہ اوست  
 اگر بہ او نرسیدی تمام بولہبی است!

'Ajam knoweth not the secrets of Faith, otherwise  
 Husain Ahmed hailing from Deoband would be strange!  
 He proclaimed a sense of community that springs from one's  
 native land.

How little he knoweth about the teachings of Muhammad.  
 Follow Muhammad closely, for that is the Faith;  
 If thou dost not approach him thou art away from the Faith.

Husain Ahmed in these lines represents that group of rank nationalists who like to deal with mankind only in terms of groups,

and who are ready to commit horrible crimes against humanity in the name of nationalism. In fact here Husain Ahmed is sublimated and represents all narrow-minded nationalists in all ages and countries. It will be seen that there is no personal hostility in the satire and the poet maintains his detachment. There is also an element of pathos in these lines.

About Machiavelli, Iqbal has written:

آن فلا رنسادى باطل پرست سرمه او دیده مردم شکست  
نسخه بهر شهنشاهان نوشت در گل مادانه پیکار کشت  
مملکت را دین او معبود ساخت فکر او مذموم را محمود ساخت  
باطل از تعلیم او بالیده است حیلہ اندازی فنی گردیده است

That Florentine, the worshipper of falsehoods—  
His antimony blinded the eyes of men.  
He wrote a book for the rulers,  
And sowed the seed of discord in our fields.  
His religion turned State into a god,  
His logic made bad appear good.  
His interpretation made falsehood flourish,  
And turned fraud into an art.

In these lines Machiavelli represents the class of politicians who have no principles and are always ready to stoop low to gain petty advantages.

Iqbal satirizes hypocrisy and pharisaical righteousness:

پیر با پیر از بیاض موشدند . سخرہ بہر کو دکان کو شدند  
دل ز نقش لالہ بیگانہ از صنم ہائے ہوس جھنڈے  
می شود ہر مود را زے خرقہ پوش آہ زین سوداگران دین فروش  
با مریدان روز و شب اندر سفر از ضرورت ہائے ملت بیخبر  
دیدہ ہائے نور مثل زرگس اند سینہ با از دولت دل مفلس اند

Our spiritual guides owe their distinction to white hair,  
 And are the laughing-stock of children in the street.  
 Their hearts bear no impress of faith in God,  
 But house the idols of sensuality.  
 Every long-haired fellow dons the robe of a guide.  
 God save us from these traffickers in religion!  
 Day and night they are travelling with disciples,  
 Insensible to the crying needs of the community.  
 Like the narcissus they have eyes, but without sight;  
 Their breasts are devoid of spiritual wealth.

These lines remind us of Chaucer's lines on '*The Monk*':

A Monk ther was, a fair for the maisterie,  
 An out-rydere, that loved venerye;  
 A manly man, to be an abbot able.  
 Greyhoundes he hadde as swift as fowels in flight;  
 Of prikyng and of hunting for the hare  
 Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.  
 His heed was balled, and schon as eny glass,  
 And eek his face as he hadde been anoynt.

The pride, pedantry, pettiness and stupidity of the religious leaders, sunk into the mire of ecclesiastical formalism, dogmatism and arrogance, are assailed with invective, penetrating wit and humour:

دین حق از کافری رسوا تر است  
 زانکه ملا مومن کافر گر است  
 شبنم ما در نگاه ما یم است  
 از نگاه او یم ما شبنم است  
 بے نصیب از حکمت دین نبی  
 آسمانش تیره از بے کوکبی  
 کم نگاه و کور ذوق و هزاره گرد  
 ملت از قال و آتوش فرد فرد

دین کافر فکر و تدبیر جہاد  
دین مافی سبیل اللہ فساد

The true religion has sunk lower than irreligiousness,  
For the *Mullā*, though religious, is busy branding people irreligious.  
Our dew appears the ocean to us—  
To him our ocean seems but dew.  
He appreciates not the wisdom of the Prophet's teachings,  
His firmament is dark being starless.  
Short-sighted, crude and an aimless wanderer,  
His harangues serve but to disrupt the community.  
The religion of the *Kāfir* consists of planning for *jibād*;  
The religion of the *Mullā* is creating trouble in the name of God.

This is reminiscent of Ben Jonson's caricature of the Puritans in the person of the Zeal-of-the-land Busy: 'as fresh an hypocrite, as ever was broached, rampant'.

In his denunciation, Iqbal is so intimate in his grasp of the actual and so conscious of the contemporary evils that his opinions have the weight of authority and personal knowledge.

It will be seen from the above satires that whereas Dryden makes his victims ludicrous by associating them with heroes of epic grandeur, and Pope reduces them to the level of worthless vermin, Iqbal simply depicts them as they are and allows the reader to form his own conclusions. In this Iqbal resembles Byron to some extent.

Generally the political satirist is concerned with the immediate questions of the day, even in his highest flights like *Absalom and Achitophel* and the *Anti-Jacob*, but Iqbal's political satires deal with institutions and so have a permanent value. For example, he writes about the League of Nations:

برفتد تار و شش وزم درین بزم کهن  
دردمندان جهان طرح خواند اخته اند  
من ازین بیش نداغم که کفن در دے چند  
ہر تقسیم قبور انجمنے ساختہ اند

To banish the institution of warfare from this ancient  
 assemblage  
 The well-wishers of the world evolved a new order;  
 I know but this that a few shroud-stealers  
 Have formed a league for distributing graves.

While admiring much in Western civilisation, Iqbal was never slow in pointing out its defects. Referring to unemployment and the falling birth-rate in many European countries he says:

کوئی پوچھے حکیم یورپ سے  
 ہندو یونان ہیں جس کے حلقہ بگوش  
 کیا یہی ہے معاشرت کا کمال  
 مرد بیکار و زن تہی آغوش

One might ask the sage from Europe,  
 Whose genius even Hind and Hellas admire,  
 Is this the goal of social evolution?  
 Unemployment amongst men and sterility amongst  
 women?

In beautiful language Iqbal points out that a society which has not been able to solve the two basic problems satisfactorily cannot be called perfect, and cannot be held up as a model for others. In another poem he points out with great effect how, in spite of wonderful progress in the sciences, it has not been possible to eradicate many social evils in the West. He writes:

بیکاری و عریالی و مسخواری و افلاس  
 کیا کم ہیں فرنگی مدنیست کے فتوحات  
 وہ قوم کہ فیضان سماوی سے ہو محروم  
 حد اس کے کمالات کی ہے برق و بخارات

Unemployment, nakedness, drunkenness and poverty—  
 These represent the triumphs of Western civilisation.  
 People who are not blessed with divine guidance,  
 Their progress is limited to electricity and steam.

Bergson says of humour and irony that 'both are forms of satire'. While opinions differ about humour, there is unanimity amongst literary critics in classifying irony as a form of satire. Iqbal has written some excellent ironic verses, and the following lines on *Mullā* will serve as an illustration:

میں بھی حاضر تھا وہاں ضبط سخن کرنے کا  
 حق سے جب حضرت ملا کو ملا حکیم بہشت  
 عرض کی میں نے الہی مری تقصیر معاف  
 خوش نہ آئیں گے اسے حور و شراب و لب کشت  
 نہیں فردوس مقام جدل و قال و اقوال  
 بحث و تکرار اس اللہ کے بندے کی سرشت  
 ہے بد آموزی اقوام و ملل کام اس کا  
 اور جنت میں نہ مسجد نہ کلیسا نہ کنشت

I was present there and could not hold my tongue;  
 When God ordained the *Mullā* to Paradise,  
 Submissively I uttered: 'Forgive me,  
 He will not care for *bouri*, wine and verdant fields.  
 Paradise is not the place to bicker, argue and quarrel,  
 And quibbling and wrangling form the very nature of  
 this man.  
 Throwing mud at people and faiths is his vocation,  
 And in Paradise there is no mosque, no church, no  
 fire-temple.'

All Iqbal's irony is characterised by his fertile imagination, his humour and his clear style:

زمن بر صوفی و ملا سلامے  
 کہ پیغام خدا گفتند مارا



ولے تاویل شان در حیرت انداخت  
خدا و جبرئیل و مصطفیٰ را

My greetings to Ṣūfī and to *Mullā*,  
For they interpreted to us God's message,  
But their commentaries have bewildered  
Even God, Gabriel and Muṣṭafā!

He refers to the lethargy and aimlessness of the Muslims of Hindustan:

بہشتے بہر پاکان حرم ہست بہشتے بہر ارباب ہم ہست  
بگو ہندی مسلمان را کہ خوش باش بہشتے فی سبیل اللہ ہم ہست

Paradise is meant for the virtuous and the righteous,  
Paradise is meant for those who dare,  
But ask the Muslims of Hindustan to cheer up,  
Paradise is to be doled out in charity too! ~

It will be seen that smoothness of verse, lucidity of style and urbanity of manner make Iqbal's satires and ironies strikingly original. As will be seen from the lines quoted above, the chief characteristics of his satires are his detachment, his robust craftsmanship, his complete mastery of the language. All these characteristics give Iqbal's satires a high place in the satirical literature of Urdu and Persian, which possesses a vast store of artistically perfect, though often harsh, satirical poetry.

# 9

## *Elegies*

MOORNING FOR THOSE dear to one, when expressed in poetical language, cannot fail to strike a responsive chord in the human heart, because Death spares no one. In modern literatures, Eastern as well as Western, an elegy either represents a lyric of mourning or is a direct utterance when faced with a personal bereavement or grief, but this was not always the case. In Greek literature an elegy was a poem written in 'elegiac' measure. To the Romans an elegy simply meant a poem written in elegiac couplets, and the elegiac couplet was a pair of lines, of which the first was a dactylic hexameter and the second a dactylic pentameter. Most of the love poetry in Latin is to be found in elegies. Thus it will be seen that in the Greek and Latin literatures elegiac poetry was not necessarily concerned with death or mourning. But this has never been the case in Oriental literatures, where an elegy is always a poem of mourning or lamentation in suitable metres. As can be imagined, the causes of lamentation could be various—War and the misery wrought by it, political feuds, the manners and morals of time and above all death. Sometimes elegies are the media of communal expression of grief, such as the Book of Lamentations or the *Marsias* of Anīs and Dabīr in Urdu. Often an elegy is a memorial or an encomiastic poem containing the poet's tribute to some friend or great man; for instance, Arnold's *Rugby Chapel* or Hālī's elegy for Hakīm Maḥmūd Khan in Urdu. Very often the philosophic and speculative elements enter into the poem as in Shelley's *Adonais*. Sometimes all these elements are combined as in 'In Memoriam'; at others the term elegy has been applied to reflective or narrative poems which are of distinctly melancholy nature, for example, Gray's *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*. But this is not generally the case in Urdu and Persian poetry.

It can be said that Arabic poetry actually started with elegy in the current sense of the term. Both pre-Islamic and Islamic poetry

possess many memorable elegies, but there flourished two poets, Khansa and Motamim, who have left us elegies which are far superior to others and are unsurpassable in the intensity of passion and beauty of diction. Khansa was very devoted to her brother Sakhar, who was killed in a battle. The shock was so great for Khansa that she used to roam about like a mad woman composing and reciting elegies in his memory. Motamim also had a brother who was killed in a battle, nothing unusual in an age when inter-tribal feuds were the order of the day, but this tragic occurrence so affected Motamim that he started roaming the country and visiting the various tribes and reciting elegies that he composed in memory of his brother. These elegies used to attract big audiences. Once Motamim went to see Caliph 'Omar, and recited one of the elegies. 'Omar was a man of steel nerves and great self-control, but he was so moved by Motamim's elegy that tears poured from his eyes. Later on, 'Omar asked Motamim to compose an elegy in memory of his brother Zaid. Motamim did this and went to see the Caliph next day with the elegy ready. After listening to it the Caliph remarked that the elegy lacked the fire and feeling of the elegies Motamim had composed in memory of his own brother. Motamim replied, 'Sir, Zaid is your brother, not mine.' This expressive remark indicates the true nature of elegiac poetry. Arabic poetry is probably the only poetry in the world which possesses elegies composed by poets referring to themselves. It is said that the first poet who composed such an elegy was Yazid ibn Hamaq. Yazid was bitten by a snake; realising that his end was near he lay down and employed his last moments in composing an elegy, a wonderful performance, because in such moments it cannot be easy to secure concentration.

Both Persian and Urdu poetry possess beautiful and memorable elegies, although their number is small as compared with Arabic poetry. Farrukhīs' elegy in memory of Maḥmūd of Ghazna and Sādi's elegy on the sack of Baghdād by the Mongols are poetry of a high order. In Urdu, Ghālīb's elegy written on the death of his nephew and Hālī's elegy on the death of his friend, Hakīm Maḥmūd Khan, will be classed with the finest elegiac poetry of the world. Then came the Lucknow school—mainly Anīs and Dabīr—whose elegies describing the sufferings of the martyrs of Kerbalā breathe immortality.

Like other mortals Iqbal suffered bereavements which moved

him to compose great and beautiful elegies. The chief elegies written by him are: *Dāgh*, *Swāmī Rām Tirath*, *Fātima*, *Shibli* and *Hāli*, *Waleda Marhuma ki yād men* (In memory of my Mother), *Humāyūn*, *Ross Masūd*, *Akbar*.

All the above elegies except that for Akbar, which is written in Persian, are written in Urdu. They were written at different periods of Iqbal's life. There are also two poems of a reflective and narrative nature which treat of Death and life after death: *Khuftegan-i-Khak se istsifar* and *Goristān-i-Shahi*.

Generally such poems are classified as descriptive, albeit melancholy, and not elegiac. But as both these poems bear a remarkable resemblance to the well-known English form of elegy a brief reference will be made to them also.

All the above were written by Iqbal in memory of persons for whom he had feelings of attachment and devotion in varying degrees. So naturally the intensity of his lament is also varying. For example, although Iqbal admired Dāgh for his poetry, he had never met him and knew him only through correspondence. His passing away only meant the setting of a literary star—a sad event but not one to evoke any stunning grief. In his elegy on Swāmī Rām Tirath, whom Iqbal never knew intimately, but whose great and charming personality he admired for its noble and sterling qualities, Iqbal pays his tribute to a great man. There is no feeling of a great personal loss, although the poet feels that the world is poorer for the death of a person so great and noble. In his elegy for Shibli and Hāli, Iqbal mourns the setting of great literary stars whose brilliance had added glory to the firmament of Urdu literature for a considerable period, and whose work for their people in fields other than the literary was also of no mean order.

Humāyūn is the nom-de-plume of the late Shāh Dīn, a great friend of Iqbal. In the short elegy on Humāyūn, Iqbal mourns the loss of a kindred spirit in whose character Iqbal found much to admire. While the poet praises the departed friend for all that he could achieve in spite of a handicap of chronic ill-health, the poem is suffused with the feelings of affection that existed between the two. This is one of the first remarkable elegies composed by Iqbal. It is a quiet poem, but solid and sincere.

In the elegy on Akbar, written in Persian, Iqbal gave expression to the grief he feels over the loss of a great friend, a versatile poet and a remarkable man. The surprising fact about this elegy is that

although it was included in the first edition of *Payām-i-Mashriq*, it was left out of the subsequent editions. An elegy was certainly out of place in *Payām-i-Mashriq*, but the poem possesses such remarkable merits that it should have been preserved. In this elegy Iqbal has paid highest tribute to his friend and fellow bard. In the last lines he writes:

دماغش ادب خوردہ عشق وستی      دلش پرورش دادہ جبرئیلے

His head drew food from love and ecstasy;  
His heart drew nourishment from Gabriel.

While all these elegies represent poetry of a high order, it is admitted by all students of Iqbal that his two great masterpieces in elegiac poetry are those he composed on the death of his mother and that of his friend Ross Masūd. Iqbal's mother died in 1914, and he was overwhelmed with a grief that found expression in this poem, which is regarded to-day as one of the most remarkable elegies in Urdu poetry. The elegy has no conscious scheme, but represents the reaction of a sorrowing spirit with high sensibility when brought face to face with a grief of great intensity. For a moment the poet forgets the sense of personal loss and begins to explore the mysteries of life and death and the laws which govern these. The inevitability and immutability of these laws, when surveyed through cold philosophy, buoys up the spirit of the poet and gives him fortitude and courage to treat all bereavements as in the course of things. But this attitude does not last long, and is of no avail when the overwhelming sense of his great loss overpowers him. There are no great thoughts in the poem, but a great poet has no need to search for thoughts that are out of the ordinary. The chief characteristics of the poem are: (i) The originality of the design, (ii) The artistic arrangement and development of thought, (iii) The nobility of the diction, (iv) The harmony and dignity of the verse.

The design of the poem is original, so far as elegies in Urdu and Persian literatures are concerned. Instead of referring to the loss he has sustained, and describing the great qualities of his mother, the poet starts by referring to the laws regulating the Universe. He faces the death of a loving mother with the fortitude of a philosopher who realises that the whole Universe and every object in it is subject to certain laws and these laws are inexorable. All



bereavements being subject to these laws, it is hardly worth while weeping over what must take place whether we like it or not. But this philosophic attitude which prepares him for standing the blow is of help only momentarily. The elegy starts with the following lines:

آسماں مجبور ہے شمس و قمر مجبور ہیں      انجم سیما پرافتار پر مجبور ہیں  
 ہے شکست انجم غنچہ کا سبد گلزار میں      سبزہ و گل بھی ہیں مجبور نمود گلزار میں  
 نغمہ بلبُل ہو یا آواز خاموش ضمیر      ہے اسی زنجیر عالمگیر میں ہر شے اسیر  
 آنکھ پر ہوتا ہے جب یہ ستر مجبوری عیاں      خشک ہو جاتا ہے دل میں اشک کلیل میں

The firmament is subject to laws, so are the Sun and Moon,  
 The mercury-footed stars are compelled to travel,  
 The bud must end by bursting in the garden,  
 The verdant grass and the flowers all have to grow in the garden.  
 It may be the nightingale's song or the silent voice of conscience,  
 All are controlled by this chain of laws.  
 When this secret of helplessness is revealed to the eye,  
 The gushing flood of tears dries up.

But just as the poet thinks that his philosophy would help him to face the grief stoically, he chances to look at his mother's picture; this leads to a complete loss of self-control.

پر تری تصویر قاصد گریہ پیہم کی ہے      آہ یہ تردید میری حکمت محکم کی ہے

But the sight of thy picture brings forth endless sobbing,  
 Ah! this is a refutation of all my solid philosophy.

Thus a small incident sweeps away all his philosophical ideas. Now the elegy starts.

حیرتی ہوں میں تری تصویر کے اعجاز کا      رخ بدل ڈالا ہے جس نے وقت کی پراز کا  
 رفتہ و حاضر کو گویا پیاپیا اس نے کیا      عہد طفلی سے مجھے پھر آشنا اس نے کیا

I wonder at the miracle performed by your picture,  
 It has changed the direction of the flight of time.  
 It has brought the past and the present together,  
 And has brought to me once again the days of childhood,



This brings back to Iqbal the fact that even when grown up he always used to feel a child in his mother's company.

علم کی سنجیدہ گفتاری بڑے بچے کا شعور      دنیوی اعزاز کی شوکت جوانی کا غرور  
زندگی کی اوج گاہوں سے اتر آتے ہیں ہم      صحبتِ مادر میں طفلِ سادہ جاتے ہیں ہم

The serious talks based on learning and consciousness of old age,

The splendour of worldly honours, pride of youth all go.

We come down from the pinnacles of life's glory,

In a mother's company we become but children.

Compare Heine:

I have been wont to bear my head on high,  
Haughty and stern am I of mood and mien.  
Yes, Tho' a king should gaze on me, I ween.  
I should not at his gaze, cast down my eye.  
But I will speak, dear mother candidly:  
When most puffed up my haughty mouth hath been.  
At thy sweet presence, blissful and severe,  
I feel the shudder of humility.

After meditating upon the miseries and troubles to which man is heir, Iqbal seeks solace in the thought that this life will after all lead to a better one. What nobler lines than the following can be imagined to prepare man for facing death with equanimity and indifference:

مرنے والے مرتے ہیں لیکن فنا ہوتے نہیں      یہ حقیقت میں کبھی ہم سے جدا ہوتے نہیں  
موت تجدید مذاقِ زندگی کا نام ہے      خواب کے پردے میں بیداری کا اکٹھا نام ہے  
جوہرِ اناں عدم سے آشنا ہوتا نہیں      آنکھ سے غائب تو ہوتا ہے فنا ہوتا نہیں  
پہاگر آئینِ ہستی ہے کہ ہو ہر شام صبح      مرقدِ انسان کی شبِ کیوں نہ ہو انجام صبح

Those facing Death die, but are not exterminated,

In reality they never leave us.

Death only means renewal of the will to live,

Under the cloak of sleep it is a call for awakening.

The essence of humanity never faces extinction,

It disappears from the eye but is not annihilated.

If the law is that every evening be followed by morn,

Why should not the night of the human grave usher in a morn.

These lines remind us of Shelley:

He lives, he wakes, 'tis Death is dead, not he  
Mourn not for Adonais—Thou Young Dawn,  
Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee  
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone.

It will be seen that through a veil of tears looms gradually the problem of immortality and faith in reunion. It is through bitter reaction and long pauses of uncertainty that the poet works out his conviction of immortality. The development of thought is natural and graceful, and its expression is highly artistic. The poem represents a mind gifted with keen sensibility and profound thinking suddenly made aware of moving sensations. Out of these sensations emerges the central idea that it is not only good to believe in the immortality of the soul, it is necessary, even inevitable to do so. No other conception is possible or tolerable. It is impossible to think of man heading towards complete annihilation.

The elegy is sustained throughout by a diction raised high above the level of common discourse, yet never so lofty that it loses the common touch. The rich variety of the verse contains homely utterances along with philosophical musings, but the diction is throughout noble and grand. For example:

کر لیا ہر جس ستیری یاد کو میں نے اسیر	دامِ سیمین تجنیل ہے مرا آفتاب گیر
جیسے کعبے میں دعاؤں سے فضا مہمور ہے	یاد سے تیری دل درد آتشنا مہمور ہے
جلوہ گاہیں اس کی ہیں لاکھوں جہان پر ثبتا	وہ فرائض کا تسلسل نام ہے جس کا حیات
آخرت بھی زندگی کی ایک جولا نگاہ ہے	مختلف ہر منزل ہستی کی رسم و راہ ہے

The silvery net of my imagination can enclose  
the worlds,  
With it I have captured thy remembrance.  
The heart addicted to pain is full of thy remembrance,  
As in Kaba the air is suffused with prayers.  
That succession of duties that we name life  
Displays itself in myriads of mortal worlds,  
Every station of life has different rules,  
The after-life is also but a jumping-off place.

The beauty of diction marks the poem as one of the noblest elegies in Urdu language. The choice of words is so natural and yet so dignified that they echo the complaint of a heart stricken

with grief of stunning intensity. The essence of the poem is not stateliness, but homeliness, tenderness and sublimity harmonised by a youthful candour that can display itself only in a mother's presence. When we come to the magnificent peroration we feel that Iqbal has given us the very best he has to give:

کون میرا خط نہ آنے سے رہے گلے قمرار	کس کو اب ہو گا وطن میں آہ میرا انتظار
اب دعائے نیم شب میں کس کو میں یاد آؤں گا	خاک مرقد پر تری لیکر یہ نثر یاد آؤں گا
میں تری خدمت کے قابل جب ہوا تو حل ہی	عمر بھر تیری محبت میری خدمت گر رہی
نور سے معمور یہ خاکی شبستاں ہو ترا	مثل ایوان سحر مرمت بد فروداں ہو ترا
سبزہ نور ستہ اس گھر کی نگہبانی کرے	آسماں تری لوح پر شمع افشانی کرے

Who would wait for me anxiously in my native place?  
 Who would display restlessness if my letter fail to arrive?  
 I will visit thy grave with this complaint:  
 Who will now think of me in the midnight prayers?  
 All thy life thy love served me with devotion,  
 When I became fit to serve thee thou departed.  
 May thy grave be radiant like the mansion of morn!  
 Radiance may fill this earthly abode of thine!  
 May Heavens shower dew on thy grave,  
 May newly grown grass serve as sentinel for this house!

Here is a child crying for his mother! In this epilogue there is not a phrase, there is hardly a word which is not made deeper in meaning and richer in fragrance by the echoes it awakens for all of us of memories of our own childhood. The most durable impression of these lines is that of a poem which renders with an infinitely subtle melody the muffled motions of a human soul overwhelmed by sorrow.

The dignity and harmony of the verse can be appreciated only by those who read the poem in the original. Words chosen, no less than ideas expressed, impart a singular dignity and charm to the poem. Iqbal uses every device the language can hold to increase the force of his rhythm and the richness of his phrasing—end-rhymes, internal rhymes, assonances and alliteration, to make the verse sparkle like rich irregular crystals in the gleaming flow of his limpid thought.

The second great elegy was written by Iqbal on the death of

his dear friend Ross Masūd. This poem is the story of an overwhelming loss when a soul is confronted by the fact that a kindred spirit is suddenly swept into the Unseen. But with the help of faith the grieving spirit gradually comes out of the shadow into a firm belief in immortality. Belief in immortality is the undertone of all his poetry and in the elegy it bursts forth into a mighty symphony which voices all the warrants of our immortality in everlasting music. But in consonance with the poet's philosophy we have to work for this immortality. Before referring to immortality, Iqbal gives vent to doubts under the impact of the shock and begins wondering as to whether this world is a reality or a mere illusion:

یہ فہر و مہ، یہ ستارے یہ آسمان کیوں  
خیال جادہ و منزل، فسانہ و افسوں  
زوال علم و ہنرمہر گنا گہاں اس کی  
مجھے رلاتی ہے اہل جہاں کی بیداری  
کسے خبر کہ یہ عالم عدم ہے یا کہ وجود  
کہ زندگی ہے سراپا رحیل بے مقصود  
وہ کارواں کا متاع گراں بہا مسعود  
فغان مرغ سحر خواں کو جانتے ہیں سرود

This Sun and Moon, these stars and the azure sky,  
Who knows if this world is real or illusory?  
Thought of journey and goal is mere illusion,  
Because life is a journey without any object.  
Knowledge and learning have suffered due to his  
sudden death,  
That esteemed member of the caravan—Masud.  
The callousness of fellow-men breaks my heart,  
Wails of the morning bird they regard as a song.

While still groping in the shadow he asks himself searching questions: Why should Death part us? Is the parting temporary or permanent?

نہ مجھ سے پوچھ کہ عمر گریز یا کیا ہے  
ہوا جو خاک سے پیدا وہ خاک میں مستور  
غبارِ راہ کو بخشا گیا ہے ذوقِ مال  
غمیں مشوکہ بہ بندِ جہاں گرفتار کم  
کسے خبر کہ یہ نیرنگ و سیمیا کیا ہے  
مگر یہ غیبتِ صغریٰ ہو یا فنا کیا ہے  
خرد بتا نہیں سکتی کہ مدعا کیا ہے  
طلبِ ہاشکتِ دآں دے کہ ماوارِ کم

Do not ask me what this fleeting life is,  
Nobody knows what is in this change and charm?  
He who is born of dust disappears into dust,

But is this parting temporary or complete annihilation?  
 Dust from the roadside has an urge for immortality,  
 Wisdom cannot tell us the object of all this.  
 Grieve not that we are prisoners in this universe,  
 The heart we possess will break through all its magic.

Then suddenly through the darkness of the shadow dawns upon the poet the light of faith in immortality. In spite of all the doubts and terrors, it was intolerable to conceive of a Godless world whirling through space towards a purposeless annihilation. If the human personality is developed and strong, death is for man but a trifling ripple on the great sea of Being.

خودی ہے زندہ تو ہی موت ایک مقامِ حیات	کہ عشق موت سے کرتا ہے امتحان ثبات
خودی ہے زندہ تو دریا ہے سبیکر نہ تیرا	تیرے فراق میں مضطر ہے موجِ نیل و فرات
خودی ہے مردہ تو مانند کاہِ پیشِ نسیم	خودی ہے زندہ تو سلطانِ جملہ موجودات
مقامِ بندہٴ مومن کا ہے درائے سپہر	زہیں سے تابہٴ شریا تمام لات و منات
حریم ذات ہے ان کا نشیمنِ ابدی	نہ تیرہ خاکِ لحد ہے نہ جلوہٴ گاہِ صفات
خود آگہاں کہ ازین خاک نے ان کوں بستند	طلسمِ ہر و سپہر و ستارہ بشکستند

If Self is alive then death is but a stage in life,  
 For love tests its immortality by death.  
 If Self is living then thy ocean is limitless,  
 The Nile and the Euphrates are longing to merge  
 in thee!  
 If Self is dead, then like grass before the breeze;  
 If Self is alive, then you rule over the universe.  
 The position of the *Momin* is beyond the Heavens,  
 From Earth to Pleiades all is sham and unreal.  
 His immortal abode is the Throne Divine,  
 Neither the dark grave nor this world.  
 The self-discerning who outsoared this earth,  
 Have outdone the magic of sun, sky and stars.

The last line brings to mind Goethe's lines written as an epitaph to Schiller, a few months after his death:

Meanwhile his mighty spirit onward pressed,  
 Where goodness, beauty, truth for ever grow,  
 And in his rear, in shadowing outline, lay,  
 The Vulgar which we all, alas, obey.



The loss of his friend was sustained by Iqbal at a mature age when his views on life, death and immortality were crystallised. However, the blow came so suddenly and unexpectedly that the poet was baffled and he started by questioning the very purpose of God. This bewilderment and confusion are only an index to the intensity of his grief. The chief characteristics of the elegy are: (i) The development of thought; (ii) the artistic arrangement; and (iii) the nobility of diction. Every section, stanza and line of the elegy was wrought to the highest degree of effectiveness which his art could compass. The central theme is human self and through bitter reactions and long pauses of uncertainty he works out his conviction of immortality and love. Belief in immortality is mentioned in all his elegies, but a reference to the fact that immortality is to be attained by us bears a close resemblance to Matthew Arnold's ideas on the subject. In the sonnet entitled 'Immortality' Arnold distinctly implied the possibility of survival for souls sufficiently heroic to rise by their inherent spiritual power to eternal life.<sup>1</sup>

In both these threnodies, apart from art and craftsmanship, there are two characteristics of design which deserve mention. As a critic has remarked of Matthew Arnold, Iqbal does not concentrate sorrow on the individual but widens his view to human life in general. It is this feature which, apart from art and imagery, imparts to both these elegies a universal appeal. Secondly, both the poems begin with a statement of the poet's doubts, but as the design develops his verses attain a statement of what the poet believes most fervently. Faith breathes in the conclusion of both elegies, and yet the interest is not centred in the conclusions, but in the moods of despair and doubt, through which the ultimate convictions are attained.

But there is something still nobler and greater in these elegies than any of the qualities we have noted. There is a spirit and courage, a strength of faith which conquers doubt and darkness, a light of inward hope which burns dauntless under the shadow of death. There is a faith which does not ignore doubt and mystery, but triumphs over them. Beneath all the distractions and shadows of a perplexing world the poet hears a divine undertone; and hearing it he can wait and be at peace.

<sup>1</sup> *The Poetry of Matthew Arnold*, p. 241. C. B. Tinker and H. F. Lowry, Oxford University Press, 1940.



The elegy on Fāṭima has charm of its own, mainly because in it the stirrings of the heart of Islam, still bleeding from the onslaughts of Western imperialism, have found expression. While commemorating the sad death of an unknown Arab girl who was shot dead by Italian soldiers, when she was distributing water among the Arab troops on the battlefields of Libya, Iqbal describes the feelings of a world-community in the process of resurgence opposed to triumphant Western imperialism. In lines of rare beauty and great poignancy addressing Fāṭima, the poet says:

فاطمہ تو آبروئے ملتِ مرحوم ہے	ذرّہ ذرّہ تیری مشّتِ خاک کا معصوم ہے
یہ سعادتِ حورِ صحرائی تیری قسمت میں تھی	غازیان دیں کی سقائی تیری قسمت میں تھی
یہ جہادِ اللہ کے رستے میں بے تیغ و سپر	ہے جسارتِ آفریں شوقِ شہادت کس قدر
فاطمہ گوشتِ بنمِ افشاں نکھیرے غم میں ہے	نغمہٴ عشرت بھی اپنے نالہ ماتم میں ہے
ہے کوئی ہنگامہ تیری تربتِ خاموش میں	پل رہی ہے ایک قوم تازہ اس آغوش میں

Fāṭima thou art the honour of this blessed community,  
Every particle of thy dust is innocent.  
O houri of the desert this was an honour destined for thee,  
To distribute water amongst God's own warriors.  
This fighting for God without sword and shield,  
How the zest for martyrdom gives one courage.  
Fatema though the eye is shedding tears of grief for thee,  
My wails have a note of glee also.  
In thy silent grave tumultuous revolution is rising,  
And a new nation is being bred in its wake.

While the elegy is a tirade against modern wars, waged against undeveloped countries by European powers, with all the modern arms of destruction at their disposal, it also describes the indomitable human spirit which does not shirk any sacrifice in the cause of freedom. The whole background of the poem depicting a young unarmed girl engaged in distributing water among her thirsty countrymen, on the burning sands of Cyrenaica, engaged in an unequal fight for the preservation of their freedom against the armed hordes of an invading army, cannot fail to excite feelings of sympathy and admiration in any human heart. The

clever use of vowels and consonants along with alliteration heighten the emotional effect. It is difficult to find a weak line in the poem. But it is not mere craftsmanship that makes the poem memorable. It is the vision of the poet who sees a comity of nations, sharing spiritual and moral values, finding strength in and rising out of the grave of this helpless, innocent, unarmed girl that gives significance to the poem. Through image, symbol, and rhythm the silent striving of the communal soul are given expression, such as music alone can give.

It now is only necessary to refer to two narrative poems which, according to the normal classification in Urdu and Persian cannot be classified as elegies, but which deal with the dead and the mystery of death. They are both remarkable poems and a brief reference to them here will not be out of place.

In *Khuftegan-i-Khak se istifsar*, written quite early in his career, Iqbal tries to unravel the mystery of life, death and life after death. The ideas, which later on crystallised into regular philosophy, are found here in a nebulous state. They represent the yearning of an enquiring spirit to explore the depths of life. The questions with which Iqbal deals in the poem are those which have baffled humanity from the dawn of creation, and will continue to baffle till the end of the world. The poems do not fail to animate us although they add zest to our melancholy. The whole poem is exalted by a grand pervading idea, which in its truest and deepest form is the grandest we can conceive: the idea that we part but to meet.

In 1910 Iqbal visited Hyderabad (Deccan), and stayed with some friends. One evening after dinner the party visited the royal graveyard near Golconda. It was a moonlit night, but clouds were about, and the scene was very impressive. Visits to graveyards always evoke thoughts of great poignancy and deep pathos, and this visit in the moonlight moved Iqbal to write the poem. As a work of art it is marvellous, and strange though it may seem, it can be safely compared to Gray's *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*. While one deals with a royal graveyard the other deals with a country churchyard, but in death Kings and plebeians meet.

Gray's elegy was written in 1750 and Iqbal's poem was written in 1910, but sentiments portrayed in both the poems display a remarkable coincidence.

In a stanza dealing with the transitoriness of human life Iqbal says:

کیا یہی ہے ان شہنشاہوں کی عظمت کمال      جن کی تدبیر تہیان بانی سے ڈرتا تھا زوال  
عرب مغفوری ہو دنیا میں کہ شان قیصری      ٹل نہیں سکتی غنیم موت کی پوشش کبھی

It is not necessary to translate the above lines; the following stanza from Gray beautifully expresses the ideas contained in them:

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Await alike the inevitable hour,  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Sarojini Naidu, the Indian poetess, has also described the royal graveyard at Golconda.

In vain, O Kings, doth time aspire,  
To make your names oblivion's sport.  
While yonder hill wears like a tiar,  
The ruined grandeur of your fort,  
Though centuries falter and decline,  
Your proven strongholds shall remain,  
Embodied memories of your line,  
Incarnate legends of your reign.

After describing this scene of exquisite beauty and charm on a moonlit night, with overhanging clouds against the background of Golconda fort perched on a high hill, Iqbal describes the graves, and then goes on to refer to the fall of the Kingdom of Golconda and its significance in the history of the human race. The reference to the history of nations, their rise and fall serves to awaken our attention and interest.

اس نیاں خانے میں کوئی ملت گردوں و تار      رہ نہیں سکتی ابتدا تک بار دوش و زگار  
اس قد قوموں کی بربادی سے ہو کر جہاں      دیکھتا ہے اعتنائی سے ہے منظر جہاں  
مصر و بابل مٹ گئے بانی نشان تک بھی نہیں      دفتر تہی ہیں ان کی داستان تک بھی نہیں  
آدیا ہر ایراں کو اجل کی شام نے      عظمت یونان و رومالوٹ لی ایام نے

In this house, where one only loses, no nation, however  
mighty,  
Can continue to dominate for ever.  
The world is so used to the annihilation of nations  
That it regards the process with unconcern.  
Egypt and Babylon have disappeared leaving no signs,  
The book of existence does not contain their story.  
The evening of annihilation has overtaken the sun of Iran,  
Times have robbed Greece and Rome of their greatness.

Thus it will be seen that owing to their artistic beauty, charm and appeal Iqbal's elegies will be classed with the best elegiac poetry of the world. But apart from craftsmanship there is, as noted before, something nobler and greater in these elegies—there is a spiritual courage and faith which conquers doubts and darkness. It is this quality which imparts to them that universal appeal which is the characteristic of all great poetry. They serve to buoy up a man's courage to face great personal disasters with fortitude and faith.

## IO

### *Chronograms*

URDU and Persian poets often record in verses the dates of important events, such as the death of notable persons, the erection of important buildings and the ascension of monarchs. This is a regular art based on the fact that each letter in the alphabet is allotted a certain numerical value; the poet has to compose his verses in such a manner that the letters contained in the words of a line add up to the desired number, which represents the year of the particular event. Working on this basic principle, poets employ various artifices to impart to the verses a high artistic value. Sometimes it is possible to get the required number from a single word in a verse, and attention is drawn to this word in an appropriate and deft way. Most poets have left us a number of chronograms. Iqbal has also, but these are not included in his published works. It has been possible to collect a few of these, and they are reproduced here so that they may not be lost sight of with the passage of time. They show Iqbal's aptitude in a particular form of poetic art. A critical study of them is neither practicable nor profitable. Their merits can only be appreciated by a comparative study, which can be done only by those who have studied chronograms, composed by other poets, in the original. While it is difficult to reproduce in translation the beauty and magic of ordinary poetry, the translation of chronograms is just impossible.

It may be mentioned here that chronograms are not always in original verses and several poets have utilised the various verses of the Qur'ān to serve as chronograms. The first chronogram composed by Iqbal was also from a verse of the Qur'ān, and referred to the death of Sir Syed Ahmed Khān, the well-known Moslem educationist.

انی متوفیک و رافعک الی و مطہرک  
 . . . . .

Lo; I am gathering thee and causing thee to ascend unto Me  
and am cleansing thee.

This verse gives the year A.H., which corresponds to 1898. It is worth mentioning that the verse is engraved as an epitaph on the tomb of Sir Syed Ahmed Khān in 'Aligarh, and while thousands and thousands of visitors have read it, very few have known that it was Iqbal who utilised the verse as a chronogram. Iqbal himself mentioned this fact to Mr Muhammad Husain 'Arshī.<sup>1</sup>

A beautiful chronogram was composed by Iqbal in connection with the death of Shaikh 'Abdul Haq.

چون منی جام شهادت شیخ عبدالحق پشید  
بادبر خاک مزارش رحمت پروردگار  
باعزیزان داغ فرقت داد در عین شباب  
آستینها از در اشک غمش سرمایه دار  
بنده حق بود و هم خدمت گزار قوم خویش  
سال تاریخ وفات او ز غفران آشکار

When 'Abdul Haq drank the wine from the cup of martyrdom,  
(May God's blessings shower on the dust of his grave!)  
He gave the shock of parting to the dear ones of his youth.  
Sleeves collected the pearls of tears shed for him.  
He served God and also his own people.  
The year of his death is indicated by 'Salvation'.

The year of Shaikh 'Abdul Haq's death is found by adding the numerical values of certain letters as indicated below:

غ	1000
ف	80
د	200
ا	1
ن	50
	<hr/>
	1331

<sup>1</sup> *Malfūzāt*, p. 51.



The year is 1331 A.H., which corresponds with 1913. The chronogram was composed on January 1, 1914.

The following beautiful chronogram was composed by Iqbal on the death of his friend Shāh Dīn, a Judge of the Punjab High Court:

در گلستان در ہمایون نکتہ سنج  
آمد مثال شبنم و چون بوئے گل رسید  
می جست عند لب خوش آہنگ سال فوت  
علامہ فصیح ز ہر چار سو شنید

In the garden of the Universe Hūmāyūn, the Sage,  
Came like dew and departed like the scent of a flower.  
The melodious nightingale, looking for the year of death,  
Heard from all four sides: 'The eloquent Scholar.'

The year of death is obtained by multiplying the value of the letters in the phrase '*Allāma-i-Faṣīḥ*' by four, and the way to this mathematical calculation is indicated by the nightingale hearing '*Allāma-i-Faṣīḥ*' from four sides. The numerical value of this phrase is 334, and this multiplied by 4 gives the year 1336 A.H., corresponding to 1918, the year in which Shāh Dīn died.

The following chronogram gives the year in which Kamāl Atātürk drove out the Greeks from the port of Smyrna, now known as Izmir.

شاخ ابراہیم راخم مصطفیٰ  
مہدی آخر زمان ہم مصطفیٰ  
گوش کن اے بے خبر تاریخ فتح  
گفت اقبال اسم اعظم مصطفیٰ

The twig of Abraham gets its moisture from Mustafa,  
Mustafa is also the Mahdi of the last epoch,

Listen if you want the date of conquest;  
Iqbal said: 'Verily the Exalted Name is Mustafa.' <sup>1</sup>

The year of conquest is given by the numerical value of the letters contained in *اسم اعظم مصطفیٰ*. It comes to 1342 A.H., corresponding to 1922.

The last chronogram by Iqbal has a note of pathos about it, as it refers to his own death. The numerical value of the letters contained in the following line from Iqbal's well-known poem *Musāfir* gives the year of the poet's death as 1357 A.H., corresponding to 1938.

صدق و اخلاص و صفا باقی نماند

Truth, sincerity and virtue are no longer to be found.

The line is appropriate to the occasion as it makes a pointed reference to the fact that great virtues have departed, evidently with the person referred to.

It is possible that Iqbal composed many other chronograms, and it is hoped that those in possession of any will publish them soon, so that they may be preserved for posterity.

<sup>1</sup> The Exalted Name is the name of the Almighty, which when repeated, according to popular belief, solves all difficulties and problems.

## II

### *Quatrains*

THE WORD *rubā'ī* has been rendered familiar to most readers of English poetry by FitzGerald's translation of 'Omar Khayyām, so much so that some writers have even used the term 'English *rubā'ī*',<sup>1</sup> but the word quatrain is used here in preference to *rubā'ī* for several reasons. At times *rubā'ī* is applied loosely to any four-lined stanza, but strictly the term is meant only for those which are in the prescribed metres and whose first two lines and fourth line rhyme (*a a b a*); and when this is not the case the stanza is generally known as *qit'ā*. As Iqbal has left us four-lined stanzas of both types—*rubā'ī* and *qit'ā*, it was considered better to describe them as quatrains. In English poetry a quatrain is a four-lined stanza, or, as in the sonnet, a four-lined unit of a larger verse-form. The best-known forms are:

(a) *The heroic quatrain*; four iambic pentameters rhyming *a b a b*: for example, the stanzas in Gray's *Elegy*:

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

(b) *The 'In Memoriam' stanza*; four iambic tetrameters rhyming *a b b a*:

To night the winds begin to rise  
And roar from yonder dropping day,  
The last red leaf is whirled away,  
The rooks are blown about the skies.

(c) *The stanza of FitzGerald's 'Omar Khayyām*; four iambic pentameters rhyming *a a b a*:

<sup>1</sup> Professor A. J. Arberry: *Poems of a Persian Ṣūfī*, p. 8.

The Moving Finger writes, and having writ,  
 Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit  
 Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,  
 Nor all thy Tears wash out a word of it.

In Persian literature the *rubā'ī* was restricted to *hazaj* metre, and was in the beginning known as *tarāna*. In this connection the following remarks by Swami Govinda Tirtha, whose monumental work on 'Omar *Khayyām*—*The Nectar of Grace*—has not yet received the recognition it deserves, will be read with interest:

Though at first free, as in Sanskrit, from restriction to any particular metre, the Persian quatrain was confined, about a century before 'Omar, to the *hazaj* metre and called *tarāna*, a song. Each line of the *tarāna* commences and ends with a spondee, has twenty 'Mātrās' and falls into 24 varieties.<sup>1</sup>

Originally all the four lines of the *tarāna* rhymed (*a a a a*), and so the composition was also known as *dū-baytī*. But, later on, the form without rhyme in the third line (*a a b a*) became more popular, and, according to some students of Persian poetry, the term *rubā'ī* was originally applied to this form of *dū-baytī*. But the distinction was never properly maintained, and we find that even quatrains with all four lines rhyming were also known as *rubā'īs*.<sup>2</sup> Hence one feels inclined to agree with Daulat *Shāh* when he says: 'As critics did not like the term *dū-baytī*, they decided that as the compositions contained four lines they should be called *rubā'īs*.'<sup>3</sup> But Muḥammad bin Qais Rāzī, in his well-known book *al-Mu'ajjam-fi-M'āyir Ash'ār al-'Ajam*, gives different reasons for the adoption of the term *rubā'ī*. According to him, the four lines of a *rubā'ī* actually formed four verses, hence the term *rubā'ī* was adopted, which according to him means not the four-lined stanza but the four-versed stanza. Sulaimān Nadvī has dealt with this in detail in his learned monograph on 'Omar *Khayyām*, but it is unnecessary for us to go into details. For our purposes it will be enough to record that the composition *rubā'ī* has been known at various times as *tarāna*, *dū-baytī* and even *khaṣī*.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Swami Govinda Tirtha: *The Nectar of Grace*, p. cxxxiii. Privately printed in Hyderabad, 1935.

<sup>2</sup> The English plural is used here instead of *rubā'iyāt*.

<sup>3</sup> *Tadhkira Daulat Shāh Samarqardi*. Nawalkishore Press, Lucknow, India, 1905.

<sup>4</sup> 'A *dū-baytī* without rhyme in the third line is called *Khaṣī*'—Rashīd-ud-Dīn Waṭwaṭ in *Hadāiq-us-Ṣaḥar*.

The origin of the *rubā'ī* is also shrouded in mystery, and various authors have narrated different stories indicating the circumstances under which this form first came to be adopted. The most probable story is that a young child playing marbles with his friends, overjoyed at his success, uttered a line which was rhythmic. Somebody, who overheard him, was so struck with the rhythm that he composed the other three lines in the same metre and thus completed the first *rubā'ī*. Some say that the young child belonged to the royal family, and others say that the poet who completed the *rubā'ī* was the well-known Persian poet Rūdakī. This incident is related here merely to emphasise the fact, often overlooked, that a Persian *rubā'ī* is a highly melodious composition possessing great beauty and flow of rhythm. Whatever may be the circumstances under which the form of the *rubā'ī* originated, we are happy to have it, for it can be said, without exaggeration, that of all Persian verse-forms the *rubā'ī* is the best-known all over the world. Now the question arises as to why the *rubā'ī* became so popular amongst Persian and Urdu poets.

From the very beginning, the *rubā'ī* was sung in Persian society, and so poets vied with each other in composing them. But apart from this fact it became popular also because it provided a convenient verse-form for what Bagehot calls 'casual expressions of single inspirations'. Generally, mystics and philosophers who had not the settled, undeviating self-devotion that is necessary for a long composition found the *rubā'ī* especially suited for the expression of sudden impulses. The *rubā'ī* has always been popular with the mystics, and to-day there are some *rubā'īs* attributed to the great mystic Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī. After him comes Rūdakī, the father of Persian poetry. Amongst philosophers the first to compose the *rubā'īs* was Fārābī. Some *rubā'īs* are believed to have been written by the well-known philosopher Avicenna. But the first great poet to write *rubā'īs* was Bābā Ṭāhir, the magic and beauty of whose *rubā'īs* are acknowledged by all. The *rubā'īs* of Bābā Ṭāhir have been translated into English by Professor A. J. Arberry. Bābā Ṭāhir was followed by the great mystic poet Abu Sa'īd Abu'l Khair.<sup>1</sup> It is a pity that the *rubā'īs* of Abū Sa'īd Abu'l Khair are

<sup>1</sup> A great deal of research and original work in connection with the *rubā'īs* of Abu Sa'īd Abu'l Khair was done by H. D. Graves Law, I.C.S., who published a fine lithographed edition of the *rubā'īs* when he was working in the Residency at Hyderabad-Deccan. By his early death in Tehran, when attached to the British Embassy there, Persian scholarship sustained an irreparable loss.

not generally known to Western students beyond the limited band of Oriental scholars. Abū Sa'īd Abu'l Khair was followed by 'Omar Khayyām. There is so much literature, in European languages, about 'Omar Khayyām that it is hardly necessary to say anything here. Another well-known poet Saḥābī Astrabādī has left a large number of *rubā'īs* whose beauty and charm are acknowledged by all. Two other poets who should be mentioned in connection with the *rubā'ī* are 'Abdullah Anṣārī and Sarmad Shahīd. •

In the Urdu language few poets have excelled in *rubā'īs*, though Anīs and Dabīr have left some beautiful examples. Ḥālī also composed a considerable number of *rubā'īs*, some of which have been rendered into English verse by Colonel Tute. But it can be said that Urdu poetry did not produce any poet who can be classed with the masters of Persian *rubā'ī*, until we come down to Amjad, the well-known *rubā'ī*-writer of Hyderabad-Deccan. Iqbal has left us a large number of quatrains, but even in his lifetime the question was raised whether all his quatrains were *rubā'īs* or not. A brief reference to the distinction between *rubā'ī* and *qit'ā* has already been made above. In view of the controversy, a detailed consideration of the point is necessary before we proceed further.

The point as to whether all his quatrains were *rubā'īs* was referred to Iqbal, and he maintained that merely because some of his quatrains were not in the prescribed metre it was not wrong to call them *rubā'ī*. In this connection he refers to the quatrains of Bābā Ṭāhir, which are also not in the prescribed metre, but are nevertheless called *rubā'īs* by Persians and students of Persian literature. Later, Professor 'Andlīb Shahdānī of Dacca University (Pakistan) published an interesting article in which he related a talk he had with Iqbal on this subject. According to Professor Shahdānī, Iqbal admitted that those quatrains in which the first two lines did not rhyme (*a b c b*) should really be called *qit'ās*, but the quatrains in which the first two lines and the fourth line rhymed (*a a b a*) could be called *rubā'ī*, whether in the prescribed twenty-four varieties of metre *hazaj* or not. Sometimes all four lines rhyme.

It is better to leave the controversy at this point and not pursue it any further. As will be seen, this is a purely technical matter concerning the terminology of verse-forms, and while in the main we shall deal here with Iqbal's *rubā'īs*, our remarks will apply



equally to his four-lined *qit'ās*, particularly those included with his *rubā'īs*.

Iqbal wrote some *rubā'īs* early in his life, but only a few have come down to us. Here is one:

بنجہ، ظلم و حسالت نے برا مال کیا  
بن کے مقراض ہمیں بے پروے بال کیا  
توڑ اس دست جفاکیش کو یارب جس نے  
روح آزادی کشمیر کو پا مال کیا

The clutches of tyranny and ignorance have reduced us to misery;  
Like a pair of scissors they've clipped our wings and feathers;  
O Lord, may the arms of that tyrant wither  
Who has suppressed the spirit of Kashmir's freedom!

But the first collection of Iqbal's *rubā'īs* was published in *Payām-i-Mashriq* under the title of *Lāla-i-Tūr* (*Tulip of Sinai*). This was followed by a small collection in *Bāl-i-Jibra'il*; these were in Urdu. The biggest collection was published in the *Armughān-i-Hijāz*. The number of quatrains in his various works is given below:

<i>Payām-i-Mashriq</i>	. 163 in Persian
<i>Bāl-i-Jibra'il</i>	. 33 in Urdu
<i>Armughān-i-Hijāz</i>	. 407, of which 394 are in Persian and 13 are in Urdu.

According to the distinction detailed above between *rubā'ī* and *qit'ā*, these quatrains can be classified:

<i>Payām-i-Mashriq</i>	. <i>Rubā'īs</i> 99, <i>Qit'ās</i> 64
<i>Bāl-i-Jibra'il</i>	. <i>Rubā'īs</i> 22, <i>Qit'ās</i> 11
<i>Armughān-i-Hijāz</i>	. (In Persian) <i>Rubā'īs</i> 362, <i>Qit'ās</i> 32; (In Urdu) <i>Rubā'īs</i> 11, <i>Qit'ās</i> 2.

The quatrains of *Payām-i-Mashriq* have been translated into English verse by Professor A. J. Arberry under the title *The Tulip of Sinai*. Towards the end Iqbal wrote a large number of quatrains, and it seems that with the decline in his physical strength, he did not have the energy or the concentration for long compositions. His impulses, being isolated and sudden, found expression 'in

profuse strains of unpremeditated art'. Professor A. J. Arberry, in translating the quatrains of Bābā Ṭāhīr, so arranged the translation, which is in the metre of Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*, that the various quatrains correspond to the stanzas of long poems. According to this arrangement sixty quatrains form fifteen poems. In *Armughān-i-Hijaz* Iqbal followed the same arrangement. He divided the quatrains into the following sections: Address to God; Address to the Prophet; Address to the Community; Address to Humanity; To the Companions of the Way; under each head different quatrains have been correlated so that they serve as stanzas of different poems. It is interesting to recall here that in the Vedas also a series of connected quatrains forms a *sūkta*.

Iqbal's *rubā'īs* have beauty and variety, and their main characteristic is rhythm and melody. His use of alliteration and assonance imparts a magical sound to them. For example:

بخود نازم گدائے بے نیازم  
 بزم - سوزم - گدازم - نئے نوازم  
 ترا از نغمہ در آتش نشاند  
 سکندر فخرتم - آئینہ سازم

I boast, I am a beggar without need;  
 I shake, I burn, I melt; I play my reed;  
 My melody has set thee all ablaze;  
 Mirrors I make, being Alexander's breed.

In the original, the effect of the alliteration is particularly fine.

There is a freshness of sentiment and spontaneity of images, which make his *rubā'īs* a combination of naturalness and sincerity:

ز افغانیم و نئے ترک و تاریم  
 چمن زراویم و از یک شاخساریم  
 تمیز رنگ و بو بر ما حرام است  
 کہ ما پروردہ یک نوبساریم

Not Afghans, Turks, or sons of Tartary,  
But of one garden, and one trunk, are we;  
Shun the criterion of scent and hue—  
We all the nurslings of one springtime be.

The commonplace facts of life are, with the magic wand of his art, converted into genuine poetry. For example:

بہ بند صوفی و ملا سیری  
حیات از حکمت قرآن نگیری  
بیاتش ترا کارے جز این نیست  
کہ از یسین او آسان بمیری

Thou art a slave to *Ṣūfī* and *Mullā*,  
Thou gatherest no sustenance from the  
lore of the Qur'ān,  
With its verses thou hast no concern,  
Save to ease thy end with its *Yāsīn*.<sup>1</sup>

In another *rubā'ī* he says:

نگہ دارد برہمن کار خود را  
نہی گوید کہ کس اسرار خود را  
بہن گوید کہ از تسبیح بگذر  
بدوش خود برد زمار خود را

The Brahman looks after his purpose with zeal,  
He discloses his secrets to none,  
He advises me to throw away the rosary,  
Yet jealously he carries the sacred thread over  
his shoulder.

His mysticism, which differs considerably from the stereotyped lifeless *Ṣūfism* of the majority of Persian and Urdu poets, imparts originality to his *rubā'īs*.

<sup>1</sup> *Yāsīn* is a section of the Qur'ān with verses which are always recited when a Muslim is dying.

ز من گو صوفیان باصفارا  
 خدا جو یان معنی آشنا را  
 غلام ہمت آن خود پرستم  
 کہ با نور خودی بیند خدا را

Take to the Sūfīs pure this word from me:  
 'Ye seek for God, and know all subtlety,  
 Yet will I serve the man who worships Self  
 And, in the light of Selfhood, God doth see.'

No poet in Urdu and Persian has left *rubā'īs* covering so wide a range of subject: politics, philosophy, mysticism, satire, irony, humour are all dealt with.

بہ برگ لالہ رنگ آمیزی عشق  
 بجان ما بلا انگیزی عشق  
 اگر این خاکدان را وا شگافی  
 درونش بنگری خونریزی عشق

'Tis Love that paints the tulip petal's hue,  
 'Tis Love that stirs the spirit's bitter rue;  
 If thou couldst cleave this carrion of clay,  
 Thou shalt behold, within, Love's bloodshed too.

برفان چمن ہمہ استانم  
 زبان غنچہ ہاے جے زبانم  
 چو میرم با صبا خاکم بیامیز  
 کہ جز طوف گلان کارے ندانم

My talk is with the songsters of the glade;  
The tongue of tongueless rosebuds I was made;  
When I am dead, O cast my dust on air—  
Attending roses is my only trade.

میارا برم بر ساحل کہ آنجا  
نوائے زندگانی نرم خیز است  
بدریا غلط و بامو جس در آویز  
حیات جاودان اندر ستیز است

Take not thy banquet on the shore, for there  
Too gently flows the melody of life:  
Plunge in the sea, do battle with the waves,  
For immortality is won in strife.

چہاں رنگ و بو فہمیدنی ہست  
درین وادی بے گل چیدنی ہست  
ولے چشم از درون خود نہ بندی  
کہ در جان تو چیزے دیدنی ہست

It must be known, this world of scent and sheen,  
They must be plucked, the roses in the dene;  
Yet do not close thine eyes upon the Self,  
Within thy soul a thing is to be seen.

اگر آگاہی از کیف و کم خویش  
مے تعمیر کن از شبنم خویش  
ولا دریوزہ متاب تا کے  
شب خود را بر افروز از دم خویش

If thou well knowest all thy quality,  
Lay down thy dew, and build thereon the sea:  
How long this begging at the moon, my heart?  
Light up thy dark with thy own radiancy!

بگو جبریل را از من پیامے  
مرا آن پیکر نوری ندادند  
ولے تاب و تب ما خاکیان بین  
نوری ذوق بحوری ندادند

Speak this my message unto Gabriel:  
'My body was not made with light aglow;  
Yet see the fervour of us sons of earth,  
This joy-in-grief no Child of Light can know!'

برہمن را نگویم هیچ کارہ  
کند سنگ گران را پارہ پارہ  
نیاید جز بہ زور دست و بازو  
خدائے را تراشیدن ز خارہ

I dare not call the Brahman inapt;  
He shatters great rocks into fragments;  
One must have sinewy arms and hands  
To carve a god out of hard rock.

توہم مثل من از خود دور جابی  
خنک روزے کہ خود را بازیابی  
مرا کافر کند اندیشہ رزق  
ترا کافر کند علم کتابی



Like me thou too knowest not the Self;  
 Happy the day when thou wilt find the Self.  
 Anxiety for livelihood makes me an infidel;  
 Too much book knowledge makes you an infidel.

جوانوں کو مری آہ سحر دے  
 پھر ان شاہین بچوں کو بال و پردے  
 خدا یا آرزو میری یہی ہے  
 مرا نور بصیرت عام کر دے

Grant the youth my morning bewails!  
 Again give the young hawks feathers and wings!  
 O Lord I have but one wish—  
 Give all and sundry the gift of my foresight!

عطا اسلاف کا جذب درون کر  
 شریک زمرہ لا بحرِ نون کر  
 خرد کی گتھیاں سلجھا چکا ہوں  
 مرے مولا مجھے صاحب جنون کر

Grant us the internal fire of our forebears;  
 Include us in the band that grieves not;  
 I have unravelled the riddles of intellect.  
 My Master, give me the frenzy of love.

رہ و رسم حرمِ نا محرمانہ  
 کلیسا کی ادا سودا گرانہ  
 تبرک ہے مرا پیراہنِ پاک  
 نہیں اہل جنوں کا یہ زمانہ

The ways in the Sanctum are unfamiliar;  
 The ways in the Church are those of tradesmen.  
 My torn garb is to be esteemed,  
 As frenzied lovers are rare to-day.

کوئی دیکھے تو میری نوازی  
 نفس ہندی مقامِ نغمہ تازی  
 نگہ آلودہ اندازِ افرنگ  
 طبیعتِ عزنوی قسمتِ ایازی

One has but to see me playing the lute;  
 The breath is from Hind but the tune is Arabic;  
 Sight is enamoured of Western manners;  
 With the taste of a master, there's the luck of a slave.

It will be seen, perhaps, even in translation, that Iqbal's *rubā'īs* contain the distilled essence of poetry, and that they entitle him to be ranked with the greatest *rubā'ī* poets of Urdu and Persian—with Bābā Ṭāhir, Abū Sa'īd Abū'l Khair and 'Abdullah Anṣārī. In his preface to *The Tulip of Sinai* Professor A. J. Arberry says: 'In fact *The Tulip of Sinai* contains some poetry of a very high order, and is certainly in the front rank of modern Persian literature.' Those who can read Iqbal's *rubā'īs* only in translation may fail to discover all their magic and beauty, especially after reading FitzGerald's translation of 'Omar Khayyām. But it should be borne in mind that it is not fair to compare any two poets in translation only—the poetry must be read in the original. As a matter of fact, the following remarks of Professor A. J. Arberry about Khayyām will be endorsed by all those who have read Khayyām in the original: 'To the Persian scholar, as a scholar, it must always be a matter for astonishment that 'Omar Khayyām has enjoyed such a vogue, for it is now common knowledge that as a poet he has ever been regarded by his countrymen as more than second-rate.'<sup>1</sup> The charm of Khayyām in translation is summed up by Professor R. A. Nicholson, when he writes about

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Arberry: *Poems of a Persian Ṣūfī*, p. 8.

FitzGerald: 'He omitted, added, altered and in every way did just as he pleased.'<sup>1</sup>

It is hoped that a collection of Iqbal's *rubā'īs* in Urdu and Persian will be published as a separate volume for the benefit of students, and that a translator will be forthcoming who will be able to introduce his *rubā'īs* to those who cannot read them in the original.

<sup>1</sup> 'Omar *Khayyām* (The Augustan Books of Modern Poetry); p. iii.

## 12

### *Iqbal and Milton*

VERY RARELY in the literary history of the world do two great poets born at different times, belonging to different races, writing in different languages, professing different religions and having sprung from different cultures show as many points of similarity in their art and thought as Milton and Iqbal. Milton was born in 1608 and died in 1674, Iqbal was born in 1873 and died in 1938. Thus their epochs are separated by a gulf of nearly two and a half centuries, and this fact alone imparts great interest to their points of similarity. And yet the strange fact is that while Iqbal has expressed his admiration for and appreciation of several great poets, such as Shakespeare, Goethe, Dante, Ghālib, Rūmi, Byron and Browning, he has not referred to Milton in any of his prose or poetical writings, except in a letter written very early in his career, in which he says that he proposes to write a great poem on the model of Milton's *Paradise Lost*.<sup>1</sup> Once he told a friend that he wanted to write a poem dealing with the tragedy of Kerbalā on the model of *Paradise Regained*. Admiration for the genius of Milton could not have been expressed in a more fitting way.

Even apart from their work there are many points of resemblance in the lives of Milton and Iqbal. Both of them are Cambridge men—Milton was at Christ's College and Iqbal at Trinity College. Strangely enough, the lives of both can be divided into three distinct periods. The three periods of Milton's life are: 1608–1639; 1639–1660; 1660–1674. The three periods of Iqbal's life are: 1873–1905; 1905–1908; 1908–1938.

Both spent a certain period of their lives outside their countries, which helped them in their education to a considerable extent. Both took an active part in politics. In connection with his political activities Milton issued pamphlets; Iqbal issued press statements and delivered political speeches. Some people have

<sup>1</sup> See page 7.

tried to trace an inherent contradiction in literary giants taking to politics, with all its ugliness and squalor. As Professor Saurat says:

It is fine and noble to sing the ways of God; it is finer and nobler to fulfil them. Therefore, in that earnest soul of Milton's, there was little hesitation. And he knew perfectly well—and this is all important—that he was sacrificing himself. He knew well enough he was not made for that struggle; there was but little of the sort of glory he cared for to be acquired from it. He said it openly: 'I should not choose this manner of writing, wherein knowing myself inferior to myself, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account, but of my left hand!'

\* \* \*

But the work was urgent and needed all hands. And Milton gave up his throne of poetical glory, and largely became an obscure workman in the service of God.<sup>1</sup>

These words apply with equal force to Iqbal. There is something touching about Milton giving up his art temporarily to serve the cause of God in other ways, and Iqbal thinking of giving it up for good in order to be able to work for his ideals in other ways.

We can recognise in *Paradise Lost* the impress of four great influences: the Bible, the Classics, the Italian poets and English Literature. Similarly in Iqbal's poetry we can see the impress of four influences: the Qur'ān, the Classics (Arabic and Persian literatures), English poets, and Urdu Literature. As we find in Milton's poetry the meeting-point of Renaissance and Reformation, in Iqbal's work we feel the meeting-point of East and West. While tracing a resemblance between the ideas and poetic sensibility of two great personalities any reference to ordinary habits or minor accidents of life seems irrelevant, but perhaps it may not be totally uninteresting to record that both Milton and Iqbal composed a good deal of their poetry in bed, both had serious trouble with eyesight (causing in Milton's case complete blindness), and both were married three times.

If we now turn to their poetry, both Iqbal and Milton wrote in two languages: Milton in Latin and English, Iqbal in Persian and Urdu. While according to accepted opinion Milton's finer poetry

<sup>1</sup> Denis Saurat: *Milton, Man and Thinker*, p. 21. J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., London, 1946.

is written in his mother tongue, it is a moot point whether Iqbal has left us greater poetry in Urdu or Persian. Both were erudite scholars; Milton's language shows Latin solidity, while Iqbal's always has an exuberance of Arabic words and phrases. A charge frequently levelled against Milton is that he corrupted the English language. Similar charges were levelled against Iqbal, and although they continued throughout his life they were more frequent early in his career. Addison's remark about Milton that language 'sank under him' applies to Iqbal also. Both poets adopt a musical and resounding style; both are fond of learned polysyllabic words, both display a magnificent choice of proper names, Milton's containing allusions to Hebrew history and Greek mythology, and Iqbal's to Hebrew and Islamic history. Both have a nobility of style which to a marked degree displays beauty, variety and a flowing rhythm. They have both been accused of a 'dissociation of sensibility'.

Adam is the central figure of Milton's great epic and in the literary sense his hero, as C. M. Bowra has pointed out. His subject is the Fall of Man. If we leave out his earlier poetry it can safely be said that all Iqbal's poetry deals with man. In his words:

For man my eyes shed tears  
Till I succeeded in unveiling the secrets of life.

Both Milton and Iqbal have written poems on Shakespeare and Time.

Early in his life, Milton's dominating idea was to write a great poem—great in theme, in style and in attainment. It was the same with Iqbal. But the comparison becomes even more interesting when we study the most prominent feature of their art. Both Milton and Iqbal have been described as poet-prophets. The great literary critic Dr H. J. C. Grierson defines prophetic poetry by saying: 'Sin, moral evil as the sources of all we suffer; righteousness and repentance as the promise of better things; these are the recurring themes of prophetic poetry'.<sup>1</sup> Dr Grierson further remarks that if ever a poet wished to be a prophetic poet it was Milton. As regards the prophetic role of Iqbal in his poetry the subject has been dealt with repeatedly and exhaustively by numerous writers, and it is hardly necessary to make any detailed reference here, but the following lines of the great poet Girāmi may be repeated: 'In

<sup>1</sup> H. J. C. Grierson: *Milton and Wordsworth*, p. 17. Chatto and Windus, 1950.



the eyes of those who know the secret of things Iqbal performed a prophet's mission, yet he cannot be called a prophet.' In all his poetry, whether dealing with the great theme of *Paradise Lost* or other less sublime subjects, Iqbal was trying to 'justify the ways of God to men', and showing individuals and nations that the only way to survive and to attain all that is worth attaining, was by treading the path of righteousness. If ever there was a poet-prophet it was Iqbal.

While the versatile genius of both Milton and Iqbal is admitted by everyone, the importance of Milton as a thinker was not fully realised until recently.<sup>1</sup> But as Professor Saurat says: 'Human thought has not left Milton behind and has still to revere in him, as well as the marvellous poet, the profound thinker. His contact with Spinoza gives us the measure of his strength; his contact with Meredith, that of his lasting value. These two great minds, so different one from the other, will serve as witnesses to the permanent worth of Milton the thinker.'<sup>2</sup> While one cannot seek any close affinity between the ideas of Milton and Iqbal certain resemblances are striking. Professor Saurat groups Milton's thought under the following heads:

(1) The idea of God as the unmanifested Infinite in whom is the Son (Creator and Creation), in whom is Christ (the elect).

(2) The idea of free will, liberated by the retraction of God, and the union of the idea of reason to the idea of liberty, which is an original proof of free will (intelligence is impossible without free will).

(3) The idea of matter as good, imperishable and divine, a part of God Himself from which all things issue spontaneously.

(4) The idea of the duality of man; reason and passion; the necessity of the triumph of reason, the Fall is the triumph of passion.

(5) The idea of liberty, based on the goodness of the normal being made of divine matter and on the presence in the elect of the Divine Intelligence.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'For the nineteenth century Milton's achievement was primarily one of music and feeling; in the twentieth the interest has shifted to his ideas.' B. Rajan: *Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth-century Reader*, p. 13. Chatto and Windus, London, 1950.

<sup>2</sup> Denis Saurat: *Milton, Man and Thinker*, p. 291. J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., London, 1945.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

While Iqbal's and Milton's ideas about God differ fundamentally owing to the different religions in which they believed, the other four ideas show a remarkable resemblance.

Both Iqbal and Milton believe in free will. According to Iqbal the freedom of conscious behaviour follows from the view of ego-activity which the Qur'ān takes. The Qur'ān lays down: 'And say: The truth is from your Lord: Let him who will believe, and let him who will reject it' (xviii: 29). Again, the Qur'ān says: 'If ye do well, to your own behoof will ye do well; and if ye do evil, against yourself will ye do it.' Iqbal points out that 'Islam recognises a very important fact of human psychology, *i.e.*, the rise and fall of the power to act freely, and is anxious to retain the power to act freely as a constant and undiminished factor in the life of the ego. The timing of the daily prayer, which, according to the Qur'ān, bestows self-possession to the ego by bringing it into closer touch with the ultimate source of life and freedom, is intended to save the ego from the mechanising effects of sleep and business. Prayer in Islam is the ego's escape from mechanism to freedom.'

Iqbal affirms that goodness is not a matter of compulsion, and a being whose movements are wholly determined, like a machine, cannot produce goodness. He thus arrives at the conclusion that freedom is a condition of goodness. The Qur'ān says: 'And for trial will We test you with evil and with good' (xxi: 30).

As regards the nature of matter, Iqbal and Milton agree that there is nothing inherently 'wrong' with matter; it is for man to overcome it. Iqbal does not agree with Milton when the latter believes that all matter is divine. According to Iqbal, matter has issued from God, by the materialising of spirit; now it is for man to spiritualise matter.

Against Milton's Passion and Reason we can set Iqbal's Intellect and Love. It is not easy to define what Milton actually meant by his terms; probably by Passion he means sensuality and by Reason self-control. It can safely be assumed that Iqbal's Intellect corresponds to Milton's Reason. But beyond Iqbal's Intellect lies the domain of Love. While Iqbal again and again emphasises the role of Love in the spiritual and moral uplift of man and in the creation of supermen he does not underrate the role of Intellect. He sees the future welfare of mankind in the wedding of Intellect with Love. Iqbal thought that man was already advanced enough

to be able to deal with Passion, or Love was potent enough to suppress it. He associates Intellect with the West and Love with the Orient, and thus there is a double meaning to the importance he places on the union of the two.

Both Milton and Iqbal attach the highest importance to liberty in the development of human personality. Milton's opinion of the importance of liberty is beautifully expressed in *Paradise Lost*:

But man over men  
He made not Lord; such title to himself  
Reserving, human left from human free.

Iqbal says:

از غلامی دل بمیرد در بدن      از غلامی روح گردد بارتن  
از غلامی ضعف پیری در شباب      از غلامی شیر غاب افگنده ناب

Under subjugation the heart dies in the body,  
Under subjugation the soul is a burden to the body,  
Under subjugation the infirmity of old age comes in youth,  
Under subjugation the lion of the forest becomes a toothless  
imbecile.

But it is in dealing with the problem of evil in the life of man that one finds the greatest similarity between the two poets. How can the divine ordering of the world be justified if in man's life evil is mingled with good. This is the subject which Milton undertakes to expound in his great epic, and his answer is the traditional Christian reply, namely that Satan or the Devil is responsible. Iqbal says, 'How is it, then, possible to reconcile the goodness and omnipotence of God with the immense volume of evil in His creation? The painful problem is really the crux of Theism.'<sup>1</sup> In tackling the problem of evil in the world Iqbal also discusses Satan.

Milton speaks of Satan as an archangel, 'if not the 'first archangel', and he is inclined to give Satan pre-eminence over all angelic beings. There is rebellion in Heaven and the immediate cause of rebellion is the proclamation that all should worship the Messiah as their Head. Satan resents the command, and makes its pretended injustice a means of drawing away a third of the angels from their allegiance. They are equal, he says, to the Messiah, self-begotten, not created, not liable to offer worship, and so playing

<sup>1</sup> *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 76.

on their pride wins them to his side. Meanwhile in his own heart an even stronger motive is at work: ambition to be equal to the Deity himself. He not only disclaims submission to the Son, he strives 'against the throne and monarchy' of the Almighty Himself, and it is as the foe, rather of God, than of Christ that the great archangel is represented by Milton in *Paradise Lost*.

While Milton believes in the story of the Fall of Man as given in the Book of Genesis, Iqbal relies on the story as related in the Qur'ān, both these narrations differ in important details. In the Qur'ān the legend of the Fall is materially transformed and instilled with new ideas of universal moral and philosophical import.

The story of the Fall is expressed thus in the Qur'ān:

When we said to the angels,  
 'Prostrate Yourselves to Adam,'  
 They prostrated themselves, but not  
 Iblis: he refused.  
 Then we said: 'O Adam!  
 Verily this is an enemy  
 To thee and thy wife:  
 So let him not get you  
 Both out of the Garden  
 So that thou art landed in misery.  
 There is therein (enough provision)  
 For thee not to go hungry,  
 Not to suffer from thirst,  
 Nor from the sun's heat.'  
 But Satan whispered evil  
 To him. He said, 'O Adam,  
 Shall I lead thee to  
 The Tree of Eternity  
 And to a Kingdom that never decays?'  
 In the result they both  
 Ate of the tree.  
 Thus did Adam disobey  
 His Lord, and allow himself  
                     To be seduced.  
 But his Lord chose him  
 For His grace.

xx: 116-20

As Iqbal says: 'Thus we see that the Qur'ānic legend of the Fall has nothing to do with the first appearance of man on this planet. Its purpose is rather to indicate man's rise from a primitive state of instinctive appetite to the conscious possession of a free

self, capable of doubt and disobedience. The Fall does not mean any moral depravity; it is man's transition from simple consciousness to the first flash of self-consciousness, a kind of waking from the dream of nature with a throb of personal casuality in one's own being. Nor does the Qur'ān regard the earth as a torture-hall, where an elementally wicked humanity is imprisoned for an original act of sin. Man's first act of disobedience was also his first act of free choice; and that is why, according to the Qur'ānic narration, Adam's first transgression was forgiven. Now goodness is not a matter of compulsion; it is the self's free surrender to the moral ideal and arises out of a willing co-operation of free egos. A being whose movements are wholly determined like a machine cannot produce goodness. Freedom is thus a condition of goodness. But to permit the emergence of a finite ego who has the power to choose, after considering the relative values of several courses of action open to him, is really to take a great risk, for the freedom to choose good involves also the freedom to choose what is the opposite of good. That God has taken this risk shows His immense faith in man; it is for man now to justify this faith.' <sup>1</sup>

While the legend on which Milton's and Iqbal's poems are based varies in detail, the conflict between God and Satan, between good and evil, retains its enthralling interest in both. Against God, who stands for order, wisdom and love, Milton and Iqbal set Satan, who stands for disorder, passion and hatred. According to tradition, pride was the cause of Satan's fall; Milton and Iqbal accepted this and made full use of it. Milton sets the beginning of his story in Heaven, when Satan incensed with envy and injured vanity at the elevation of Christ to share the glory of the Almighty prefers revolt to submission. In Iqbal's version, Satan in his pride refuses to render obeisance to man; henceforth the desire for disorder rules Satan's actions. Milton's Satan seeks disorder in the hope of inflicting pain upon God, Iqbal's in the hope of proving that God's trust in man was misplaced. Either way, Satan decides to promote ruin on earth and accepts Beelzebub's plan to corrupt man as a means to revenge himself upon God. Milton's solution to the Fall of Man is that out of it a new kind of goodness is born, and that man can show heroic qualities by doing his duty in the face of great obstacles. The incomparable end of *Paradise Lost* shows the spirit of con-

<sup>1</sup> *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 80-1.



fidence and courage in which men should set out on the undoubted perils of life. Adam and Eve go, knowing well what it means for them in effort and sacrifice. Milton's poem deals with great issues, the goodness and baseness of man, and he is eager to show how partial evil contributes to universal good. Describing Adam and Satan Milton's epic deals with the struggle between good and evil, as do Iqbal's poems, but with Iqbal 'the word Adam is retained and used more as a concept than as the name of a concrete human individual'.

After his expulsion from Heaven Satan's sense of injured pride turns into hatred for those who, according to him, have been the cause of his downfall, and for all connected with them. Satan's plan for the corruption of man rises from deep malice. Milton plans Satan as an antithesis to God and shows how the powers of evil, disorder, unreason and hatred work in him. But these powers, however odious they may be, are not contemptible; they are formidable and in certain settings look impressive. In fact, Milton's Satan is much more impressive after the Fall than before. In the first four books of *Paradise Lost* Satan almost cuts a heroic figure in the high epic style. Milton and Iqbal closely resemble each other in this description of Satan as a heroic figure, and both versions stand out in contradiction to the orthodox literatures of Christianity and Islam. Milton's Satan displays many qualities that are noble and admirable. He is a great leader in war, especially in defeat; he does what none of his comrades dares to do, he is full of resource, he is wonderfully eloquent and even when things go wrong he does not give way to despair. His unflinching courage in the hour of defeat, and his refusal to submit extort our admiration. Iqbal also portrays Satan with numerous admirable qualities, and he cannot imagine the world without Satan—it would be too dull to live in:

مزی اندر چہانے کورذوتے  
کہ یزداں دارد و شیطان ندارد

Do not live in the ill-planned world,  
Where there is a God, but no Satan.

It has been remarked that it was mostly through Augustine and other Manichee missionary activities, and partly through Kabbalist



literature, that the figure of Satan assumed a form different from that originally depicted in the religious literatures of Christianity and Islam. In Islamic literature the concept of Satan as a heroic figure remained confined to some mystic writers such as Hallāj and Ibnul 'Arabī, but in the West Satan in the heroic role was described in many poems. For our purposes it is unnecessary to deal with the subject further. But in spite of the close resemblance between the ideas of Milton and Iqbal so far as the character of Satan is concerned, there is one important difference which must be pointed out here. While every student of Milton has noticed the grandeur and splendour which Milton ascribed to Satan soon after the Fall—so much so that it is up to this day a controversial point whether Satan or Adam is the hero of *Paradise Lost*—very few writers have noticed the gradual decay in Satan's character after the Fall. Once Satan believes that no reconciliation with God is possible he sets 'himself on his desperate path and cares for nothing but to destroy. His heroic spirit has finally disappeared and never again shows itself. He has even lost his effrontery; for after his successful corruption of Eve

Back to the Thicket slunk  
The guiltie Serpent.

IX: 784-85

Just as his appearance decays so does his character, until he becomes wholly loathsome and even contemptible. In him Milton has shown the corruption of a spirit through pride and envy and the destructive illusions which they breed.'<sup>1</sup>

There is no such gradual decay in the character in Iqbal's Satan. Iqbal's Satan had a very complex character, the contradictions in which had to be resolved, but the absence of gradual decay made its portrayal less difficult from the artistic point of view. On the other hand Satan's character as portrayed by Iqbal is more appealing. There is an apparent contradiction between his heroic

<sup>1</sup> C. M. Bowra: *From Virgil to Milton*, p. 226. Macmillan and Co., London, 1945.

'Chronologically Satan's deterioration is neither continual nor consistent: before his fall from Heaven he is far less impressive than he is immediately after it. But the difference (made unavoidable by Satan's function in Heaven) is one submerged in the unity which the reading order stipulates, the inexorable law of Satan's degeneration which is exercised so evenly from the first books to the last.' B. Rajan: *Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth-century Reader*, p. 105. Chatto and Windus, London, 1947.

spirit and his corrupt motives, between his courageous acts and the end to which they are directed, but both Iqbal and Milton take care to solve this contradiction. Iqbal has not to deal with the gradual decay although he portrays different aspects of a complex character on different occasions. Satan's character is summed up by Iqbal beautifully in *Jāvid Nāmāh* in the following lines:

گفت و چشم نیم و ابر من کشود	در عمل جز ما کہ بر خوردار بود
آنچنان بر کار با پیچیدہ ام	فرصت آدینہ را کم دیدہ ام
نہ مرا افرشتہ نے چاکرے	وحی من بے منت پیغمبرے
در گذشتم از سجود اے بے خبر	ساز کردم ارغنون خیر و شر
تا نصیب از درد آدم داشتم	قہر بار از بہر او نگذاشتم

He turned half-closed eyes towards me and said:  
 'In action who was more submissive than me?  
 I am so busy with matters,  
 I rarely enjoy leisure even on the Sabbath.  
 I have neither angels nor servants,  
 My revelation is without a prophet.  
 I refused obeisance, O unwary!  
 Thereby I started the organ of good and evil.  
 Because I had sympathy with him in his woes  
 I did not leave Friend's wrath for him.'

In Iqbal Satan continues to display some admirable qualities—his singleness of purpose, his dynamic energy, his ceaseless striving in the cause to which he has dedicated himself, and above all his sense of humour and maintenance of humour even in defeat. As a matter of fact, he complains to the Almighty that his adversary, the man, does not offer sufficient resistance to him. And with his shrewdness he is fully conscious of the contribution he is making to the evolution of mankind. He tells Gabriel:

If you get time pray ask the Almighty:  
 Whose blood has added colour to man's story.

And he tells the Almighty:

تو بہ بدن جاں دہی، شور بجان من دم  
 تو بہ سکون رہ زنی، من بہ تپش رہ برم

You put life into the body, I create turmoil in life;  
You show the way to tranquillity, I point the way to  
fiery dynamism.

There are two situations of great psychological interest described by both Milton and Iqbal. In Milton Satan 'thinks' of repentance, but rejects it as impossible, and then his pride reasserts itself:

and that word  
Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame  
Among the spirits beneath.

*Paradise Lost*, IV: 81-3

Since he believes that no reconciliation with God is possible, he decides to pursue the only alternative course and to follow evil.<sup>1</sup>

Iqbal makes Gabriel once suggest to Satan to repent, but Satan rejects the suggestion with contempt. As regards conciliation Satan tells the poet:

برلیم از وصل ناید سخن      وصل اگر نخواهم نه او ماند نه من

On my lips there is no word about reconciliation,  
If I want reconciliation neither He remains nor I.

To sum up: while Satan's character in Milton's and Iqbal's writings shows many points of resemblance when judged from the artistic point of view, Iqbal shows a more rationalistic view of the part evil plays in human life. Iqbal's Satan is neither a rebel against God nor an enemy of man. He is fulfilling his allotted role in the scheme of things, and that role is not only important but essential. The tragedy of Satan's life is that he cannot change his destiny, his inner helplessness and sheer inability to be other than he is, are beautifully brought out both by Milton and Iqbal. Against this helpless Satan is set Man, who is the master of his destiny. As Iqbal says in his reference to the teachings of Qur'ān, with which he fully agrees: 'The teaching of the Qur'ān, which believes in the possibility of improvement of the behaviour of man and his control over natural forces, is neither optimism nor pessimism. It is meliorism, which recognises a growing universe and is animated by the hope of man's eventual victory over evil.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. M. Bowra: *From Virgil to Milton*, p. 225. Macmillan and Co., London, 1945.

<sup>2</sup> *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 77.

It is difficult to give naturalness to the language of superhuman beings, and even the greatest artists have avoided the Divine voice. For example, in the Beatific Vision, which is the climax of the *Divine Comedy*, there is the rose of glorified saints and there are nine choirs of angels, but there is no Divine Voice, and it is light only that indicates the Divine presence. Milton often chooses to have the Divine voice, and generally his noble diction is admirably fitted for this purpose. But this is not always the case, and we are reminded of Pope's remarks, 'And God the Father turns a School-Divine'. Iqbal is certainly more successful than Milton in treating sublime themes with dignity and reverence. In *Jāvid Nāmāh* the Divine voice addresses the poet in language of great majesty and grandeur:

زنده؛ مشتاق شو، حلاق شو      ہم پو ما گیرندہ آفاق شو  
ہر کہ اور اوقاتِ تخلیق نیست      پیش ما جز کا سر و زندق نیست

If thou art living, have desires and be a creator,  
Like Us create and comprehend worlds.  
He that hath no power to create,  
For Us is naught but an infidel without faith.

It will be seen that no sense of awe deters either Milton or Iqbal; there are no mysteries for either and no reticence before the Ineffable.

It has already been mentioned that both Milton and Iqbal have written some poems on the same subjects, like Shakespeare and Time, etc. This is merely accidental. What is more interesting is the way these two great masters have described similar situations, especially, as we have seen, when dealing with Satan or the problem of good and evil. Milton has dealt with this subject mainly in *Paradise Lost*; Iqbal in several poems, chief of which are *Taskhir-i-Fitrat* in *Payām-i-Mashriq*, *Iblis* and *Gabriel* in *Zarb-i-Kalim*, *Iblis ki Majlis* in *Armughān-i-Hijāz*, and some other poems.

Compare their ways of painting the same scene, such as when the angel Michael bids good-bye to Adam and Eve.

To whom thus also th' Angel last replied:  
'This having learnt, thou hast attained the sum  
Of wisdom; hope no higher, though all the Stars

Thou knew'st by name, and all th' ethereal Powers,  
 All secrets of the deep, all Nature's works,  
 Or works of God in Heaven, Air, Earth or Sea,  
 And all the riches of this World enjoy'dst,  
 And all the rule, one Empire; only add  
 Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add faith,  
 Add Virtue, Patience, Temperance, add Love,  
 By name to come called Charity, the soul  
 Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loath  
 To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess  
 A Paradise within thee, happier far.

. . . . .

That ye may live, which will be many days,  
 Both in one Faith unanimous though sad,  
 With cause for evils past, yet much more cheered  
 With meditation on the happy end.'

*Paradise Lost*, XII: 574-605

In Iqbal's poem angels bid this farewell to Adam:

عطا ہوئی ہے تجھے روز و شب کی بے تابی  
 خبر نہیں کہ توحش کی ہے یا کہ سیمابی  
 سنا ہے خاک سے تیری نمود ہے لیکن  
 تری سرشت میں ہے کو کبی و ہمتابی  
 تری نوا سے ہے بے پردہ زندگی کا ضمیر  
 کہ تیرے ساز کی فطرت نے کی ہے مضرابی

Thou hast been given the restlessness of Day and Night,  
 We know not whether thou art of earth or mercury.  
 We hear thou art created from the earth,  
 But in thy nature is the glitter of stars and Moon.  
 Thy melody unravels the secret of life  
 For Nature has attuned thy organ.

But most of the sentiments expressed by the angel Michael, when bidding farewell to Adam, are also expressed by Iqbal when he makes the Earth greet him:

کھول آنکھ زمیں دیکھ فلک دیکھ فضا دیکھ  
 مشرق سے ابھرتے ہوئے سورج کو ذرا دیکھ  
 اس جلوہ بے پردہ کو پردوں میں چھپا دیکھ  
 ایام جدائی کے ستم دیکھ جفا دیکھ  
 بے تاب نہ ہو معرکہ بیم ورجا دیکھ  
 ہیں تیرے تصرف میں یہ بادل یہ گھٹائیں  
 یہ گنبدِ فلک، یہ خاموش فضا میں  
 یہ کوہ، یہ صحرا یہ سمندر یہ ہو آئیں  
 تھیں پیش نظر کل تو فرشتوں کی ادائیں  
 آئینہ ایام میں آج اپنی ادا دیکھ

Open thine eye: behold the earth, the stars, the atmosphere!  
 Behold awhile the sun rising from the east,  
 Behold this unveil'd vision hid in the veils of light!  
 Behold the anguish and torment of the days of separation!  
 But be not overwrought, behold the contest of Hope and Fear.  
 These clouds and thunders are for thee to control,  
 The high vault of the Heavens and the silence of space,  
 These mountains, these deserts, these oceans and the winds.  
 Till yesterday the angels' charm fascinated thee,  
 To-day in Time's mirror behold thy own charm.

The following lines of Iqbal:

جتنے نہیں بختے ہوئے فردوس نظر میں  
 جنت تری پنہاں ہے ترے خونِ جگر میں

One does not set much value to Paradise granted.  
 Your paradise is concealed in your life blood.

may be compared with Milton's:

Then will thou not be loath  
 To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess  
 A Paradise within thee, happier far.



Adam admits that even his fall is to be valued as the occasion for the eventual triumph of goodness:

O goodness infinite, goodness immense!  
That all this good of evil shall produce,  
And evil turn to good.

XII: 469-71

In Iqbal when man appears before God on the Day of Judgement he expresses similar sentiments:

اے کہ زخورشید تو کو کب جان مستیر  
از دلم اندر وختی شمع جهان ضریر  
من بہ زمین در شدم، من بفلک بر شدم  
بستہ جادوئے من ذرہ و ہر منیر  
گرچہ فسوش مرا برد ز راہ صواب  
از غلظم در گذر عذر گستاہم پذیر  
عقل بدام آورد فطرت چالاک را  
اہر من شعلہ زاد سجده کند خاک را

O Thou whose Sun gives light to the star of life,  
With my heart thou hast lighted the candle in this world.  
I went under the earth, I went over the sky,  
Under my domain are the atom as well the glittering Sun.  
Although his guile has led me astray from the path of rectitude.  
Forgive my wrongs and accept my excuse for the sin.  
Intelligence ensnares the one endowed with cunning and guile;  
Satan, born of fire, performs obeisance to man of clay!

In spite of the different similes, different metaphors and different methods of expression used by the two poets, owing to the difference of their cultural background, the sentiments expressed by them are so similar that they serve to produce the same desired effect upon any reader. This shows a marked similarity of sensibility between the two poets and points to the undoubted universality of their art. When dealing with master craftsmen such as Milton and Iqbal, it is futile to say that some lines of Iqbal are finer poetry than the corresponding lines of Milton, or vice versa. All the lines quoted above are poetry of the finest order,

and a comparison is meant only to show the similarity of their artistic approach in spite of the different colours and washes employed by the two artists. However, one must repeat that to appreciate the comparison properly one must be able to read Iqbal in the original.

*Prose Writings*

نغمہ کجا و من کجا ساز سخن بماند ایست  
سوئے قطار می کشم ناتواں بے زمام را

I and a song! Verse making is but a device  
To attract the unbridled camel towards the line.

SOME of the greatest poets of the world have left great works in prose; and although it is scarcely to be looked for that even the most supreme genius should keep up in prose the lofty level reached in poems like *Paradise Lost*, *Faust* or *Jāvid Nāmāh*, the prose works of some poets are of sufficient literary merit to entitle the writer to permanent fame among the literary men of the world, and so they deserve our study and attention. Some of the greatest poets in Arabic, Persian and Urdu are equally well known as prose-writers, so much so that if by any mischance their poetical works were to disappear, the world would be deprived of great works but the literary fame of the poets would survive. One has only to mention al-Ma'arrī, Sa'dī, and Ghālib, who have left us beautiful works in poetry as well as in prose. Even if he had not left any poetical works, Sa'dī's name would be well known wherever the Persian language is spoken or understood to-day. The same can be said of al-Ma'arrī and Ghālib. Poets in other languages equally well known for their prose writings will suggest themselves. In Sanskrit we have Bāna; in German, Goethe; equally famous for his poetical and prose works; in French there was Victor Hugo; and in English, Milton, Coleridge, Scott, Wordsworth, Matthew Arnold and others. They all wrote with facility in prose as well as in poetry, although the standard of

literary excellence in the two media could not always be considered the same.

It will thus be seen that there is no real incompatibility between writing prose and verse. On the other hand, if the secret of all art, as laid down by Croce, lies in expression, it should be possible for all literary artists to excel in expressing themselves both in verse and prose. But it is not given to all to be versatile, and even great poets have not always found it easy to keep up the high level of their poetical art in their prose writings. Although we may agree with Saintsbury that 'in prose especially it is possible to gain a very high place, and to deserve it, without any genius at all', we often find that even the greatest masters of verse have failed hopelessly when they applied their hand to prose. Richard Garnett, when referring to the prose writings of Milton, has said: 'We must, therefore, agree with Mr Myers that Milton in a measure exemplifies the maxim "Prose is for an age, poetry for all time".'<sup>1</sup>

Whether the prose works of great poets are of a sufficiently high order to deserve our attention on their own merits or not, the study of such writings is always bound to prove interesting and fruitful. In the first place they help us understand the working of the poet's mind, and secondly they tend to throw light on the development of the poet's genius. No student, after reading Dante's *Convito*, can fail to observe that along with superb imagination and wonderful artistic taste there existed in the poet gross narrow-mindedness, a fact mainly responsible for the uneven quality of the *Divine Comedy*. No commentary, no explanations and no guide can help us gain an insight into the inner recesses of the author of *Bostān* as a study of *Gulistān* can. No one who has not studied *Gulistān* can truly enjoy the poetical works of Sa'di. Iqbal's prose writings are of such a high order that Sir Dennison Ross remarked: 'In 1934, however, he published a series of six lectures, in which he set forth more plainly his philosophy and his ideals for a better world centred in Islam entitled, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, by which he will probably be best remembered.' When a great scholar like Dennison Ross considers that one of Iqbal's prose writings will be esteemed by posterity more than his great poetical works, even though we may not share his view, we should devote some time to the study of his prose.

<sup>1</sup> *The Prose of Milton*, edited by Richard Garnett, p. ix.

Iqbal wrote prose in two languages, Urdu and English, and, with his poetry, it will always remain debatable which language contains his best work from the literary point of view. Let us first consider his Urdu writings: (1) '*Ilmul-Iqtisād*. (2) His masterly prefaces to his poetical works *Asrār-i-Khūdī*, *Rumūz-i-Bekhūdī*, and *Payām-i-Mashriq*. (3) His letters. (4) His pamphlets,<sup>1</sup> articles and press interviews. (5) His speeches.

'*Ilmul-Iqtisād* is the only book in Urdu left by Iqbal, and it is the first book on Economics in the Urdu language. The book is now out of date and also out of print, but its chief interest lies in the fact that it is his first published work. A copy of the book still exists in the Public Library, Lahore. Iqbal himself refers to the book in one of his letters as 'the first standard book in Urdu on Economics'.

Iqbal wrote masterly introductions to his first three books of Persian verses, *Asrār-i-Khūdī*, *Rumūz-i-Bekhūdī* and *Payām-i-Mashriq*. Unfortunately, the introductions to *Asrār-i-Khūdī* and *Rumūz-i-Bekhūdī* were left out of subsequent editions, but the introduction to *Payām-i-Mashriq* is still there. All three introductions are brilliant essays on subjects connected with the poems. They deserve and will secure a very high place for Iqbal in the ranks of Urdu essayists. It is indeed a pity that his multifarious activities did not leave Iqbal time to write more essays in the Urdu language, because this channel of literary expression suited him admirably.

All these three introductions are literature deserving a permanent place in Urdu prose. Their chief characteristic is prophetic fervour. Even Professor R. A. Nicholson regretted that the introduction of *Asrār-i-Khūdī* was left out of subsequent editions, for in the introduction to this book, Iqbal surveys briefly, but concisely, the growth of pantheistic mysticism in Islam, and gives a brief historical survey of the influence of neo-Platonic ideas on Islamic thought. This introduction shows his vast learning and his capacity for writing on philosophical and ethical subjects in a graceful style. His consummate command over language is apparent from every sentence, and the flow and spontaneity of language

<sup>1</sup> While Iqbal never issued pamphlets in the sense that Milton did, he issued lengthy statements and gave press interviews on the topics of the day, and these served the same purpose as Milton's pamphlets.

are most impressive. We have only to refer to the opening sentences:

یہ وحدت وجدانی یا شعور کا روشن نقطہ، جس سے تمام انسانی  
تخیلات و جذبات و تمثیلات مستنیر ہوتے ہیں، یہ پراسرار شے جو  
فطرت انسانی کی مستشر اور غیر محدود کیفیتوں کی شیرازہ بند ہے، یہ  
”خودی“ یا ”انا“ یا ”میں“ جو اپنے عمل کی رو سے ظاہر اور اپنی حقیقت  
کی رو سے مضمحل ہے، جو تمام مشاہدات کی خالق ہے مگر جس کی لطافت  
مشاہدہ کی گرم نگاہوں کی تاب نہیں لاسکتی کیا چیز ہے؟ کیا ایک  
لازوال حقیقت ہے یا زندگی نے محض عارضی طور پر اپنی فوری  
عملی اغراض کے حصول کی خاطر اپنے آپ کو اس فریب تخیل  
یا دروغ مصلحت آمیز کی صورت میں نمایاں کیا ہے۔ اخلاقی اعتبار  
سے افراد و اقوام کا طرز عمل اس نہایت ضروری سوال کے جواب  
پر منحصر ہے۔

What is this centre of intuitional unity, this bright spot of consciousness which illuminates all human thoughts, emotions, and imagination? What is this mysterious object which serves to correlate the scattered and unlimited potentialities of human nature? What is this 'ego' or 'self' or 'I' which, although it reveals itself through actions, remains concealed so far as its true nature is concerned, and which, in spite of being the creative source of all human observations, cannot be submitted to the scrutiny of an observer? Is it an eternal Truth, or has life invented this illusion or plausible deception merely to help in the attainment of its objective? Looking from the moral and ethical stand-points the behaviour of individuals and nations will depend upon the answer to this extremely vital question.



The introduction to *Rumūz-i-Bekhūdī* is brief, but it is also a great composition. His definition of the communal ego is masterly:

۔ جس طرح حیات افراد میں جلب منفعت، دفع مضرت،  
نعین عمل و ذوق حقائق عالیہ، احساس نفس کے تدریجی نشوونما،  
اس کے تسلسل، توسیع اور استحکام سے وابستہ ہے۔ اسی طرح ملل  
و اقوام کی حیات کار از بھی اسی احساس یا بالفاظ دیگر قومی  
”انا“ کی حفاظت، تربیت اور استحکام میں مضمر ہے۔

Just as in the individual life the acquisition of gain, protection against injury, determination for action, and appreciation of higher values are all dependent upon the gradual development of the ego-consciousness, its continuity, enhancement and consolidation, similarly the secret of the life of nations and people depends on the same process, which can be described as the development, preservation and consolidation of the communal ego.

The introduction to *Payām-i-Mashriq*, in its thoroughness, its critical spirit and general sweep is unsurpassed in the whole of Urdu literature. Within a few pages Iqbal presents a masterly survey of the Persian movement in German literature. His command over language wins our admiration, while his precision, brevity and scholarly simplicity, combined with a consummate mastery of his subject, impart a special charm to the introduction.

Iqbal was a very regular correspondent, and he always replied to letters with great promptitude. Among his correspondents were people from all grades of society, all over the world—mighty potentates, proud dictators, eminent philosophers, reputed scholars, well-known politicians and humble students. The whole personality of Iqbal is revealed in the lines of his letters. They show the variety and exuberance of his mind and provide an index to the vastness of his intellect. They are chiefly characterised by an absence of conventionality, formality and stiffness.

In the art of personal revelation, that rare art which has given immortality to the writings of Montaigne, Goethe and Rousseau, Iqbal stands in the front line. His letters represent a sincere

delineation of a soul in its quest for truth. There is a peculiar sweetness and freshness in all of them, a sense of the elemental, and the result is that they cease to be domestic documents giving only details of his private life.

The letters have a distinct literary flavour and show spontaneity, ease and lightness of style. Occasionally they are inspired by deep emotion and rise to heights of real eloquence; for example in a letter to a friend he writes:

ہر حال حدود خودی کے تعین کا نام شریعت ہے اور شریعت  
اپنے قلب کی گہرائیوں میں محسوس کرنے کا نام طریقت ہے۔  
جب احکام الہی خودی میں اس حد تک سرایت کر جائیں کہ  
خودی کے پرائیویٹ امیال و عواطف باقی نہ رہیں اور صرف  
رضائے الہی اس کا مقصود ہو جائے تو زندگی کی اس کیفیت کو  
بعض اکابر صوفیائے اسلام نے فنا کہا ہے۔ بعض نے اسی کا  
نام بقا رکھا ہے لیکن ہندی اور ایرانی صوفیہ میں سے اکثر نے  
مسئد فنا کی تفسیر فلسفہ ویدانت اور بدھ مت کے زیر اثر کی ہے۔  
جس کا نتیجہ یہ ہوا کہ مسلمان اس وقت عملی اعتبار سے  
ناکارہ محض ہے۔ \*

A proper appreciation of the limits of the self is known as *sharī'at* (the Islamic code of life), and to realise this code in the very depths of one's being is *ṭariqat* (the mystic way to perfection). When God's commands get so suffused in the self that the private affections and attachments cease to exist, and the only object of life for the self becomes fulfilment of God's will, the condition is described by some eminent mystics of Islam as *fanā* (self-annihilation), and by others as *baqā* (self-preservation). But when explaining the process of *fanā* most of the Indian and Persian mystics were under the influence of Vedantic

philosophy and Buddhist teachings, and so a result of their writings was to render the Muslim utterly impotent from the practical point of view.<sup>1</sup>

Iqbal takes the world into his confidence without reticence or timidity. There is not a line he has written which is not a frank confession of the interests and purposes of a living soul.

Urdu literature contains a vast collection of letters noted for their literary excellence, but Iqbal's will be regarded as some of the most interesting and impressive of them all.

Very few of Iqbal's articles, pamphlets and speeches are available to-day, and this brief reference is made in the hope that it will induce someone to collect and publish them before it is too late. They remind us of Milton's pamphlets in English. For an illustration one has only to quote the following passage:

انسان کی تاریخ پر نظر ڈالو - ایک لامتناہی سلسلہ ہے ،  
 باہم آویزشوں کا ، خون ریزیوں کا ، اور خانہ جنگیوں کا - کیا ان  
 حالات میں عالم بشری میں ایک ایسی امت قائم ہو سکتی ہے ،  
 جس کی اجتماعی زندگی امن اور سلامتی پر مومس ہو - قرآن کا  
 جواب ہے کہ ہاں ہو سکتی ہے ؛ بشرطیکہ توحید الہی کو انسانی فکر و عمل  
 میں حسبِ منشاء الہی مسود کرنا انسان کا نصب العین قرار پائے -  
 ایسے نصب العین کی تلاش اور اس کا قیام سیاسی تدبیر کا کرشمہ  
 نہ سمجھے ، بلکہ یہ رحمتہ للعالمین کی ایک شان ہے کہ اقوام بشری کو  
 ان کے تمام خوساختہ تقوتوں اور فضیلتوں سے پاک کر کے ایک ایسی  
 امت کی تخلیق کی جائے جس کو اُمَّةٌ مُّسْلِمَةٌ لَّكَ کہہ سکیں اور اس  
 کے فکر و عمل پر شہدائے علی الناس کا خدائی ارشاد صادق آسکے -

<sup>1</sup> *Iqbal-Nāmah*, p. 202. Ashraf, Lahore, 1944.

Look at the history of mankind, it is an unending succession of deadly combats, blood feuds, and internecine wars. Now the question arises as to whether in these circumstances it is possible to bring forth a community, the basis of whose collective life will be peace and goodwill. According to the Qur'ān this is possible, but only when man adopts as his ideal the direction of all his thoughts and actions by faith in the unity of God, as ordained by the Almighty. But the quest and attainment of this ideal cannot be left to political statesmanship. It will really be a blessing from God, the Beneficent, that abolishing all self-imposed distinctions and differences amongst the nations of the world, a community is created which can be virtually styled as a 'people obedient to God', and whose thoughts and actions can be truly described in God's own words, as those of the 'guardians of mankind'.

In order to give an idea of the literary value of his articles we venture to give an extract from one of his oldest published articles, written in reply to a critic who considered the introduction of Punjabi words in the Urdu language a linguistic heresy:

ابھی کل کی بات ہے اُردو زبان جامع مسجد دہلی کی سیرٹھیوں  
تک محدود تھی۔ مگر چونکہ بعض خصوصیات کی وجہ سے اس میں برٹھنے  
کا مادہ تھا اس بولی نے ہندوستان کے دیگر حصوں کو بھی تسخیر  
کرنا شروع کیا، اور کیا تعجب ہے کہ کبھی تمام ملک ہندوستان  
اس کے زیرِ نگیں ہو جائے۔ ایسی صورت میں یہ ممکن نہیں کہ جہاں  
جہاں اس کا رواج ہو وہاں کے لوگوں کا طریقہ معاشرت ان کے  
تمدنی حالات اور ان کا طریقہ بیان اس پر اثر لے بغیر رہے، علم السنہ کا  
یہ مسلیمہ اصول ہے جس کی صداقت اور صحت تمام زبانوں کی تاریخ  
سے واضح ہوتی ہے۔ اور یہ بات کسی لکھنوی یا دہلوی کے امکان  
میں نہیں کہ اصول کے عمل کو روک سکے۔ تعجب ہے کہ میز، کمرہ،

لجھری، نیلام وغیرہ اور فارسی اور انگریزی کے محاورات کے  
لفظی ترجمے تو بلا تکلف استعمال کرو لیکن اگر کوئی شخص اپنی  
اُردو تحریر میں کسی پنجابی محاورے کا لفظی ترجمہ یا کوئی پر معنی  
پنجابی لفظ استعمال کر دے تو اس کو کفر و شرک کا مرتکب سمجھو \*

Only until recent times the use of the Urdu language was confined to the precincts of Jum'ā Masjid, Delhi, but as this language has an infinite capacity for expansion, owing to certain characteristics, it also gained a hold over other parts of the subcontinent, and there is every possibility that soon it may acquire a sway over the whole subcontinent. But in these circumstances it is impossible that the social customs, cultural heritage and ways of expression of the people of the areas concerned, will fail to exercise a certain influence on the language used. This is an accepted philological principle, whose truth is evident from the history of all languages, and it is not in the power of any individual, whether he hails from Delhi or Lucknow, to stop the operation of this principle. It is surprising that while no objection is taken to the use of words like *maiz* (table), *kamra* (room), *kutchery* (court) and *neelām* (auction), and literal translations of other Persian and English phrases, if a person happens to use in his Urdu writings a literal translation of a Punjabi idiom or a word he should be declared guilty of linguistic heresy.<sup>1</sup>

Iqbal was a forceful speaker and an effective orator, and there are numerous published reports of his speeches, but very few of his Urdu speeches are available to-day. The task of collecting them will not be easy, but it is hoped that someone will undertake this work. His artistic temperament imparted literary charm to all his speeches.

It has been remarked that it is Iqbal's prophetic force which is most remarkable and in this lies the secret of the abiding influence of all his prose writings. This makes it all the more necessary for us not to overlook the danger that, while valuing him as a teacher, we may overlook his gifts as a man of letters. Yet whatever we may think of the particular truth which he is enforcing, the manner in which he utters it arrests us. So we must find out what an original combination of gifts he possesses as a man of

<sup>1</sup> *Makhsan*, October, 1902; a monthly journal published at one time from Lahore, Pakistan.

letters. The first characteristic of his style is its lucidity, for he was never obscure, and could easily expound the most intricate and highly technical subject:

جس طرح رنگ و بو و غیرہ کیلئے 'مختص حواس' ہیں اسی طرح انسانوں میں ایک اور حاسہ بھی ہے جسکو "حس واقعات" کہنا چاہیے۔ ہماری زندگی واقعات گرد و پیش کے مشاہدہ کرنے اور ان کے صحیح مفہوم کو سمجھ کر عمل پیرا ہونے پر منحصر ہے۔ مگر ہم میں سے کتنے ہیں جو اس قوت سے کام لیتے ہیں جس کو میں نے "حس واقعات" کی اصطلاح سے تعبیر کیا ہے؟ نظام قدرت کے پراسرار بطن سے واقعات پیدا ہوتے رہے ہیں اور ہوتے رہیں گے، مگر یہ کون سے پہلے کون جانتا تھا کہ یہ واقعات حاضرہ جن کو نظریات کے دلداد فلسفی اپنے تخیل کی بندی سے بہ نگاہ حقارت دیکھتے ہیں اپنے اندر حقائق اور معارف کا یہ گنج گراں مایہ پوشیدہ رکھتے ہیں۔

Just as we have different senses for the perception of colour, scent, etc., there is a sense in man which can be best described as 'the sense of events'. Our life depends upon the observation of events taking place around us and on laying down the lines of our action only after understanding the true significance of these events. But how many are there amongst us who actually use this sense, which I have described as 'the sense of events'? From the mysterious womb of the system of nature various events have been taking shape, and will continue to take shape; but nobody before Bacon had realised that these events and phenomena—which the speculative philosophers, living on the heights to which their imaginations had soared, described as insignificant—contained in them the great wealth of realities and truths.<sup>1</sup>

The second characteristic of Iqbal's style is his command over language. He is a consummate artist, with powers of vivid

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to *Asrār-i-Khūdī* (First Edition).



expression unmatched in Urdu literature. He has an inevitable instinct for the right word. This supreme artistic faculty never deserts him and makes him a superb phrase-maker. He always believed in a meticulous choice of words. Very few passages in Urdu can compete with this:

رفتہ رفتہ چودھویں صدی کے تمام عجمی شعرا اس رنگ میں  
رنگین ہو گئے۔ ایرانیوں کی نازک مزاج اور لطیف الطبع قوم اس  
طویل دماغی مشقت کی کہاں متحمل ہو سکتی تھی جو جزو سے کل  
تک پہنچنے کے لئے ضروری ہے، انہوں نے جزا اور کل کا دشوار گزار  
درمیانی فاصلہ تخیل کی مدد سے طے کر کے ”رگ چراغ“ میں ”خون  
آفتاب“ کا اور ”تزارسنگ“ میں ”جلوہ طور“ کا بلا واسطہ مسابہہ  
کیا۔

Gradually these ideas infected all the Persian poets of the fourteenth century. Artistic and highly aesthetic people like the Persians could not stand the arduous work which is required for exploring the connection between the part and the Whole, so they traversed this difficult and tortuous passage with the aid of their imagination. They could see in the illumination of a candle the glory of the Sun, and in the spark from a stone, the Light of Sinai, without any intermediate stages, that is to say, they established a direct connection between the phenomenal and the noumenal world.<sup>1</sup>

Thirdly, there is his virility and vigour. He is always forceful and effective and never dull. The following passage will illustrate this:

مشرق اور بالخصوص اسلامی مشرق نے صدیوں کی مسلسل  
نیند کے بعد آنکھ کھولی ہے، مگر اقوام مشرق کو یہ محسوس کر لینا

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to *Asrār-i-Khūdī* (First Edition).

جاہیے کہ زندگی اپنے حوالی میں کسی قسم کا انقلاب پیدا نہیں کر سکتی جب تک کہ پہلے اس کی اندرونی گہرائیوں میں انقلاب نہ ہو۔ اور کوئی نئی دنیا خارجی وجود اختیار نہیں کر سکتی جب تک کہ اُس کا وجود پہلے انسانوں کے ضمیر میں مشکل نہ ہو۔ فطرت کا یہ اہل قانون جس کو قرآن نے اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا یَغۡیۡرُ مَا بِقَوۡمٍ حَتّٰی یُغۡیِّرُوۡا مَاۤیَاۤنۡفُسِہِمۡ کے سادہ اور بلیغ الفاظ میں بیان کیا ہے۔ زندگی کے فردی و اجتماعی دونوں پہلوؤں پر حاوی ہے۔

After centuries the East, and particularly the Islamic East, is awake, but Eastern nations have to realise that life cannot produce any change in its environment until there is a revolution in its very depths. And no new world can actually assume shape until it first takes a definite shape in man's mind. This relentless law of Nature, which the Qur'ān describes in the following simple, but eloquent words, applies equally to the individual and collective aspects of human life:

‘Verily never  
Will God change the condition  
Of a people, until they  
Change it themselves,  
Within their own souls.’<sup>1</sup>

And then there is his brevity. He puts much meaning in few words. For example:

افراد کی صورت میں احساس نفس کا تسلسل، قوت حافظہ سے ہے، اقوام کی صورت میں اس کا تسلسل و استحکام قومی تاریخ کی حفاظت سے ہے۔ گویا قومی تاریخ حیات ملیہ کے لئے بمنزلہ قوت

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to *Payām-i-Mashriq*.

حافظہ کے ہے جو اس کے مختلف مراحل کے حسیات و اعمال کو مربوط کر کے ”قومی انا“ کا زمانی تسلسل محفوظ و قائم رکھتی ہے۔ فلم الحیات و عمرانیات کے اسی نکتہ کو مد نظر رکھ کر میں نے ملت اسلامیہ کی ہئیت ترکیبی اور اس کے مختلف اجزاء و عناصر پر نظر ڈالی ہے، اور مجھے یقین ہے کہ امت مسلمہ کی حیات کا صحیح ادراک اسی نقطہ نگاہ سے حاصل ہو سکتا ہے۔

While in the case of individuals the thread of continuity in the life of the self is furnished by memory, in the case of nations this continuity and consequent stability is provided by the safeguarding of national history. That is to say, national history takes the place of memory in the life of a nation, and by co-ordinating national feelings and actions at various stages of evolution any history helps in preserving and defining the communal ego in the context of time. I have tried to review the synthesis of the Islamic community<sup>1</sup> and its various components and elements from this biological and economic standpoint. I am convinced that a proper understanding of the life of the Muslim community of nations can be obtained only when we approach the problem from this angle.<sup>1</sup>

In judging the literary importance of Iqbal's prose writings, we have the following maxim laid down by W. J. Dawson:

The great writers who command not a transient but age-long reverence have usually proved their greatness in one or more of three ways—their writings are personal confessions, that is, they are the intimate and enduring records of the individual soul, they possess the secret of style, by which we mean they are written in such a form that they illustrate, in a supreme degree, the art and mastery of language, or they express moral truths of eternal value and infinite moment.<sup>2</sup>

Judged by these standards it can safely be said that Iqbal's writings are entitled to a permanent and important place in Urdu literature.

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to *Rumūz-i-Bekhūdī* (First Edition).

<sup>2</sup> W. J. Dawson: *The Makers of Modern Prose*, p. 202, published by Hodder and Stoughton, London.

They fulfil all three tests. Every word written by Iqbal is the confession of a soul with a definite purpose. He talks of truth as he sees it. There is the impress of deliberate egoism on every sentence. As regards excellence of style we have seen how his supreme artistic faculty imparts the glow of genius even to his least considered writings. As for moral truths, it is unnecessary to say any more here, for enough has been said to demonstrate the importance of Iqbal's message to his times. It is unfortunately true that his total output in prose is not very great, but that makes it all the more important that we should preserve all that is left.

We have examined briefly Iqbal's works in Urdu, but a study of these alone cannot give us a true idea of Iqbal's influence on Urdu prose. For this we have to keep in mind the inspiring influence he exercised over a band of young authors in several branches of Urdu prose. In spite of monumental works like *Sīrat-an-Nabī* it has to be admitted that Urdu literature is none too rich in biography, and Iqbal used to say that Urdu needs biographies, on the lines of Emil Ludwig's biographical sketches—cross-sections displaying the subject's personality. Similarly, about short stories he used to say that, instead of imitating the methods of de Maupassant and other realist European writers, our budding authors should look for themes in their own history. Sufficient time has not passed to gauge the influence Iqbal exercised on young Urdu authors, but recent tendencies in both these branches of Urdu prose indicate that Iqbal's influence is already bearing fruit.

Now we have to consider Iqbal's prose writings in English. Iqbal wrote two books in the English language: *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* and *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. In addition to these he wrote several articles and delivered a large number of speeches and lectures. Then we have his letters.

*The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* is a masterly monograph, although Iqbal, when permitting it to be translated into Urdu in 1928, was modest enough to write that very little of the book could escape criticism twenty years after its publication. However, no better compliment could have been paid to the work than the fact that an English firm was willing to publish a book, written by a young student, who at that time was hardly known to the literary world. And although Iqbal was always modest whenever he referred to the book, it has been used as a work of reference

by eminent writers. For instance, the great English Orientalist, Professor E. G. Browne, says:

The other shorter but fuller account of Mulla Sadra's doctrine is given by Sheykh Muḥammad Iqbal, formerly a pupil of Dr McTaggart in this University of Cambridge, and now himself a notable and original thinker in India, in his excellent little book entitled *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*.<sup>1</sup>

The book was most aptly dedicated to Iqbal's friend and teacher, Sir Thomas Arnold, Professor of Arabic in the University of London. As regards the book itself, one may not agree with Iqbal's conclusions, yet none can fail to be impressed by his masterly survey of the subject. The book is written with style and makes very pleasant reading. For the benefit of those to whom the original book may not be available for reference, the following passage is quoted:

It seems to me that the Persian mind is rather impatient of detail, and consequently destitute of that organising faculty which gradually works out a system of ideas, by interpreting the fundamental principles with reference to the ordinary facts of observation. The subtle Brahmin sees the inner unity of things; endeavours to discover it in all the aspects of human experience, and illustrates its hidden presence in the concrete in various ways; the latter appears to be satisfied with a bare universality, and does not attempt to verify the richness of its inner content. The butterfly imagination of the Persian flies, half-inebriated as it were, from flower to flower and seems to be incapable of reviewing the garden as a whole. For this reason his deepest thoughts and emotions find expression mostly in disconnected verses (*ghazal*) which reveal all the subtlety of his artistic soul. The Hindu, while admitting, like the Persian, the necessity of a higher source of knowledge, yet calmly moves from experience to experience, mercilessly dissecting them, and forcing them to yield their underlying universality. In fact the Persian is only half-conscious of Metaphysics as a system of thought; his Brahmin brother, on the other hand, is fully alive to the need of presenting his theory in the form of a thoroughly

<sup>1</sup> Professor E. G. Browne: *A Literary History of Persia*, Vol. IV, p. 431. Cambridge University Press.

reasoned-out system. And the result of this mental difference between the two nations is clear. In the one case we have only partially worked-out systems of thought; in the other case, the awful sublimity of the searching Vedanta.<sup>1</sup>

In *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Iqbal's philosophy, presented to us in other writings only in poetic gleams, or in a diffused living glow, is here presented in the form of a thesis. The gospel of Iqbal, that is, the fullest expression of what he regarded as his spiritual message to his times, is best learned from this book. The book attracted world-wide attention and, as remarked already, Sir Dennison Ross regarded it as Iqbal's most notable writing. Sir Dennison Ross is mistaken in thinking that Iqbal will be best remembered by *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, but his remarks provide an indication of the book's importance among Iqbal's writings.

Lord Lothian in his message to the Muslim Students Brotherhood, Lahore, in January, 1938, said:

I am delighted to hear that there is to be a celebration in honour of Sir Muhammad Iqbal on January 9. He is famous as a poet, as a philosopher and as an interpreter of Islam far beyond the confines of his country. Only recently the Oxford University Press published a book of his philosophic and religious essays which attracted widespread and admiring attention.

These essays are written in elegant English. The language is idiomatic and always impressive, and some of the passages rise to the heights of eloquence. For example:

Humanity needs three things to-day—a spiritual interpretation of the universe, spiritual emancipation of the individual, and basic principles of a universal import directing the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis. Modern Europe has, no doubt, built idealistic systems on these lines, but experience shows that truth revealed through pure reason is incapable of bringing that fire of living conviction which personal revelation alone can bring. This is the reason why pure thought has so little influenced men, while religion has always elevated individuals and transformed whole societies. The idealism of

<sup>1</sup> *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, p. viii. Luzac and Co., London, 1908.



Europe never became a living factor in her life, and the result is a perverted ego seeking itself through mutually intolerant democracies whose sole function is to exploit the poor in the interest of the rich. Believe me, Europe to-day is the greatest hindrance in the way of man's ethical advancement.<sup>1</sup> •

The dominant theme throughout these essays is the note of prophecy. It must be remembered that, as a spiritual and moral force, there is no modern writer of the Muslim world who has affected his age so deeply, and Iqbal exercises this influence as much through these essays as through his inspired poetry.

It is a pity that Iqbal's speeches and articles have not yet been published, but it is hoped that they will be collected and published soon. Iqbal delivered a series of lectures in London when he was studying at Cambridge. He frequently spoke in public on various topics. As in Urdu, his lectures in English covered a great variety of subjects—philosophy, religion and education. He was a graceful and dignified speaker, very popular with his audiences, whom he regaled with humorous maxims and interesting anecdotes. He excelled in delivering popular discourses on technical and abstruse subjects. As a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, he delivered important speeches on various subjects. His presidential speech at the 1930 session of the Muslim League, to which reference has already been made, was an epoch-making oration, not only because it prescribed a new solution for the political troubles of the subcontinent of India but also for the wealth of historical, sociological and political information embodied in it:

Thus the upshot of the intellectual movement initiated by such men as Rousseau and Luther was the break-up of the one into a mutually ill-adjusted many, the transformation of a human into a national outlook, requiring a more realistic foundation, such as the notion of country, and finding expression through varying systems of polity evolved on national lines, *i.e.*, on lines which recognise territory as the only principle of political solidarity. If you begin with the conception of religion as complete other-worldliness, then what has happened to Christianity in Europe is perfectly natural. The universal ethical system of Jesus is displaced by national systems of ethics and polity. The

<sup>1</sup> *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 118.

conclusion to which Europe is consequently driven, is that religion is a private affair of the individual, and has nothing to do with what is called man's temporal life. Islam does not bifurcate the unity of man into an irreconcilable duality of spirit and matter.

Iqbal was not a prolific contributor to journals and magazines, but he wrote occasionally. In 1902 he contributed an article on 'Perfect Man' to *The Indian Antiquary* of Bombay. It has not been possible to secure a copy of this article. Then in about 1916 he contributed a series of articles to the weekly journal *The New Era*, published in Lucknow, and extracts from these articles were quoted by Professor R. A. Nicholson in his Introduction to *The Secrets of the Self*.

Like his letters in Urdu, Iqbal's letters in English possess a remarkable literary flavour and a charm all their own. The outstanding literary qualities are elegance of diction, apt use of idiom and the ease with which he writes on the most intricate subjects. Iqbal's pent-up fervour found an outlet in these letters. The sincerity and frankness which characterise all his writings are most noticeable in his letters, mainly because, unlike Pope, he did not sit at his desk with one eye on his correspondent and the other on the public. His letters to Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah have been published, and we hope one day to see a complete edition of his English letters.



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